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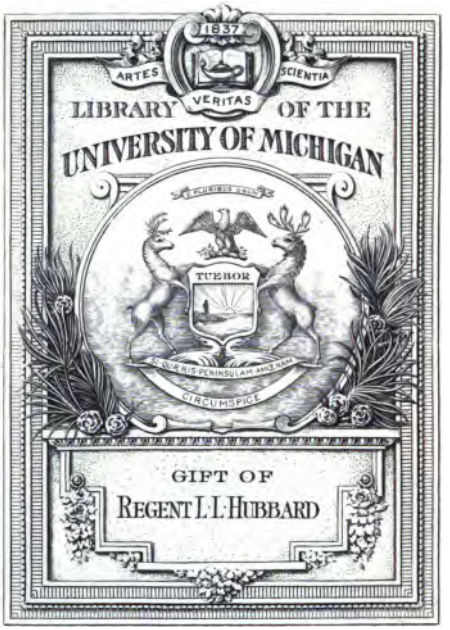
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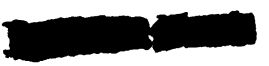

HUNTING THE BUFFALO.

The wealth and dignity of the Indian warrior is nearly proportioned to the number of buffalo robes he can afford to dispose of to the traders. Hence he follows upon the track of the migratory herd, and continues to slay them with the sole reference to the value of the skins.—Page 352.

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T. NELSON AND SONS, LONDON AND EDINBURGH.

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# WILD SCENES

IN THE

# FOREST AND PRAIRIE;

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## ROMANCE OF NATURAL HISTORY.

Charles Wilkins

By W. C. Webber.

T. NELSON AND SONS, LONDON; EDINBURGH;
AND NEW YORK.

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# INTRODUCTION.

Our name, the Romance of Natural History, or Wild Scenes and Wild Hunters, must tell for itself, in a great measure, for surely it has abundant significance of its own. It may, perhaps, seem to form too comprehensive a title for such space as we have here. It is to be borne in remembrance, however, that all things are comparative; and, as I had to begin somewhere, I have chosen to look upon the Wild Scenes and Wild Hunters of the World from the starting-point of my own life, and within the sphere of my own and contemporary experience.

I have endeavoured to produce a book which, in its desultory manner, will yet be found not without its aim to instruct, as well as to amuse, in the legitimate themes of Natural History, and to give a life-like interest to the study, not always to be derived from the technical treatises of the mere Naturalist.

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at their airy antics, plainly against the moon as it rose up.

Then, when I went out by myself into the deep wood, I sat down on the moss at the root of an old tree, to watch for the squirrel. When everything was still again, I would see him after a while poking his nose slyly out of the hole, snuff! snuff! Then out his head would pop to rest his chin upon his fore-paws, and he would look all around, above, and below, very cunningly, to see if all was right. Then out, like a thought, he would glide, and I could see his lovely brush quickly curled and spread so grandly above his head as he sat upon a limb, still for the moment. Lo! there is another snuffing nose, and then great shining eyes filling the round black knot-hole, and out another pops—and then another, and another. Such whisking of tails, darting along limbs, and bounding from swinging twig to rustling tree-tops, until they all meet.

Now the frolic begins in earnest, and they dart round and round the trunks, rattling the bark down as they chase each other. Their tails are spread now as wide as they can, as if they were scared; and that lady squirrel he makes love to, you may be sure, for now he has chased her out to the very end of a great high limb; and, hard pushed, here she comes right off into the air!—down almost into my face—the white of her arms underneath, spread wide like her stiffened tail—into the leaves head foremost,

and then up and away, patter! patter! patter! Here he comes, too, sailing down after her, plump! and rattles off along the old logs and swinging vines in hot chase.

So they all would frolic, chasing one another, and one of them would see me, and stop and stamp his tiny feet and bark at me, jerking his tail in comic wrath. Sometimes another would dart away suddenly, as if possessed, scurrying round and round the tree.

Nor were these all the sights I saw out there in those quaintly-peopled woods. There was saucy chip-munck, with black and white stripes down his brown back; he was a smart fellow, too, upon the ground, and lived in the prettiest house under an old stump. He would show his striped nose, pushing through the long moss hanging over his little hole under the decaying root. How bright his soft, vivid eyes, and how his long black whiskers tremble as he pricks his short ears to listen. Then, quick as lightning, he mounts the stump, frisking his pert tail at a great rate; you can see his little white bosom beating fast, like a toy watch in a flurry, as he glances sharply round; then away he darts, pit-a-pat! leaping on another stump to look again; now he is satisfied the coast is clear, and with a soft chirping squeak dives down into the leaves, scratching them aside and pushing under them his inquisitive nose. Ha! another soft chirp, and he darts back upon the

stump again, and you can see his small cheeks are all puffed out. In a moment one of the acorns he has found is in his paws, and sitting up straight as a little goblin man, you can soon hear his sharp teeth, creak! creak! against the hull.

He, too, has friends that live with him. Whenever you happen to turn over a stone, and see a blind sluggish creature under it, looking like a brick-dusted lizard, do not hurt the little helpless thing, for when night comes it will dart about and sparkle in the most beautiful manner, like a living carbuncle, among the strange night-flowering fungi that droop like it in the morning.

At first I went forth among the creatures of earth in peace, and saw them in my simple faith; and all my pleasantest memories of calm, unmixed delight, are associated with that time of innocent wonder and loving familiarity with these fresh articulations of God's thought in living forms.

But as my passions grew, this harmless wonder changed into curiosity, that became insatiable for a more intimate knowledge. I yearned to know them better, to see them more closely, to feel them, to possess. I became jealous of that graceful freedom I had at first admired so much, because it took them away from me just when my heart was overflowing towards them; I reached forth my arms to clasp them to my bosom, and then anger arose. The pride of a despotic will, the rights of the natural

lord were wounded, and thus became aroused to an embittered consciousness of strength, and a wilful purpose to use it against my gentle playfellows. I was impatient of this liberty that could take them from me when they willed, and desired to restrain them to come to me when I willed.

I had no thought of their death when I first learned to ensnare them. It would have broken my heart then to have slain one; and so full was I of love for them, that I could not fully realize how much they suffered in being deprived of freedom. The sunny attic, I proudly called my room, soon became a sort of caravansary filled with these captive travellers of air and earth. What a happiness it was to me to familiarize each new prisoner with my presence, and sit and watch, in low-breathed quiet, all their ways, as I used to do in the woods! How I loved to have them on my person, to caress me, to feed from my hands and mouth, to peck at me in feigned wrath, or seize my hands with harmless teeth in fierce dissembled savagery! Aye, I was proud then—even happy as a king.

When the snow came, too, what a joyful time that was to me, for now I was to capture many more lovely friends!

Then what a busy time, making new traps, and appropriating every kind of boards that were available, to be split into trap-pieces. What a teasing my father to make me triggers for spring-falls.

nooses, partridge-traps, traps for little birds, and all. How I wondered I could not get him to understand that I should be ruined if I did not get my traps ready to be set early—even by breakfast-time—for the other boys would be setting theirs too, and take all the best places.

Little did I care for the hot coffee and cakes that morning, but snatching a sup and a bite, was off, whistling for Milo, and shouting for Pompey the negro boy, to accompany and help me. Eagerly did we discuss, as we made our way through the deep snow, whether the thicket in the corn-field fence row, the blackberry patch in the corner, or on the edge of the woods, were the surest places for partridges or hares. There was no deciding between them, so, to settle the matter, a trap was set at each place, and one in addition for larks, pigeons' red-birds, and sparrows, by the old wheat-stack behind the barn.

Pompey, who carried the spade, dug away the snow from each sagaciously chosen place, and exposed the black earth beneath, so that our tempting bait might show from afar. Then was the trap placed over it on the bare spot, and set with such careful nicety. Now, with many a wistful look behind, to see if the birds were not at it already, we went on to set the next.

When this first and most important business was got through with, then came hare-hunting under the snow.

Ah, that was the sport! The hare would sit still wherever the storm overtook her, and when the snow began to cover her over, she would keep crowding, and pushing gently back and forward, pressing it to one side until she had formed a roomy little chamber all about her. The snow would go on heaping and heaping, until a domed arch grew over all with just one little round hole, kept open through its top by the warm air of her breathing; and there she would sit, snug as a Russian princess, in her palace of ice, and dreaming of luscious cabbage-leaves and tender apple-shoots in the neighbouring garden. But puss's golden visions were as subject to be rudely dispelled as those of other people.

See, Milo's keen nose has scented one of those very breathing-holes on the smooth, glistening surface of the snow; he has stopped suddenly on the plunge, with his foot raised. "Steady, steady, boy!" We are up with him in long leaps. Now for it! "Hie on, boy!" and helter-skelter, here we come! I, Milo, Pompey, all together, tumbling heels over head upon the snowy roof of puss's palace. There she is—I feel the soft, warm fur—her plaintive cry is heard—we have her! "Hold hard, Pompey; she kicks so with her strong hind-legs that she will surely get away. Down you, Milo! There now—we have her tied—she is secure!"

Every hour or two the traps near at hand are visited, and those at a distance twice a day. We

start upon our rounds. From afar we can see that one is down. My heart jumps! I long sorely to run! Pompey starts off, I call him back, doubting the dignity of showing the eagerness which I feel as much as he.

I walk slow and stately, speculating on my probable prize; thinking of a whole dozen of partridges — a splendid male red-bird; or, it may be, a large fat pheasant, or some entirely new and wondrous creature, as best befitting my just claims.

We are close at hand; we can see the little tenement shake—hear the heavy beat of struggling wings. That sound is too much for my stoicism. With fluttering pulse I spring eagerly forward—bah!—it is nothing but a common thieving jay!

I almost stagger with the revulsion of my soaring aspirations, while Pompey proceeds to get out the poor bird with sundry abusive epithets and threats of neck-wringing. I have said I was not cruel; it was indeed painful to me to witness the death of any of my prisoners, but the shock to my high-flown hopes was too much for me, and in this case I did not recover in time to save the unlucky victim of a superstition universal among our negroes.

But this was not all our sport on the snow either. If it grew damp towards evening, then the cold night-winds would freeze its untrampled surface, and by the time morning came again, there would be a

hard crust over all—hard enough, at any rate, to bear puss's weight.

Now, such grand chases as we would have after her upon the crust. Milo's nose was to find the hare in the stubble-field, by the little breathing-holes through the top of her palace under the snow; then we had all the little dogs from the quarter, who were not much heavier than she, to chase her on the crust.

This was the greatest affair of all—greater than catching her at once in her house, for here we gave the hare a fair start, and could see the whole chase to the end.

Before sunrise, Pompey had assembled from the quarter the other young negroes—Dick, Sambo, and the rest—with their cur-dogs, terriers, and all other kinds of light dogs, each one led by a string around its neck; for it would spoil the fun and interfere with Milo to have them loose until the time came. Such a gabbling and a yelping as they made when Milo and I came out, and took the lead through the deep crackling snow towards the great field.

Sometimes the snow would bear us for a moment, and then up somebody's heels would fly, and such a shrieking and tumbling about and laughter as there would be; then the eager mongrels, when they saw Milo run ahead with long high plunges through the snow, would yell with anger at being tied, and leap against their tow-leashes, or, darting between the

holder's legs, would trip him up, and break away. Then there was no catching the runaway, for he would be cunning enough not to come when his master called, so I would have to order a halt, and call in my obedient Milo, and then the runaway would be decoyed in reach of some one who would snatch the trailing tow-string, and make him prisoner once more.

So, at last, with all our stoppages in this way, and in climbing the half-buried fences, where the negroes' dogs would get nearly hung at times in jumping through the wrong places, we would come to the old stubble just about when the sunrise scattered the dawn, and everything was glitter with the blaze. We veiled our eyes from the dazzle with our coat-sleeves and caps, when the white glare of the wide unbroken surface was thrown into our faces.

But my eyes would soon bear it when I caught a glimpse of Milo's flying ears almost disappearing in his deep plunges through the snow, then rising again with his high leaps. He knew the time for action had come in earnest, and the little dogs, straining on their leashes, would whine and shift their feet, and yelp to get away, while they watched him, with great white eyes almost jumping out of their heads in their eagerness.

We all stand still in breathless watching, as he covers his ground right and left scientifically, as if there were no snow to hinder him. But standing still,

over the knees in the snow, is very hard for boys, and I begin to stamp with the cold and impatience, and rub my hands, while Pompey and his negro companions gradually draw their breaths and commence gabbling away as noisily as ever.

Bursting almost with impatience, I have great trouble to hold back my rabble, for we must get close before Milo is hied on, so as to have a fair run of it.

"Steady, boy! steady! Hold back there Dick, you rascal, hold the dogs!

I can see the point of Milo's tail shaking, and his ears quiver with restrained excitement. Now for it!

"Hie on, boy!" One long bound—he plunges beneath the snow amidst the briars!—one breathless moment! there she is!

From beneath his very feet she bursts through the powdered snow, and shaking it from her fur, at one leap she is clear upon the firm crust, and after slipping up once or twice, makes steadily off.

Such a burst of yells, yelps, and screeches! Such a jumble-together, helter-skelter, heels-in-the-air start as we make of it. I, little dogs, negroes and all! such falls and such tripping up! such crackling and crashing! Now the little dogs, that have at first slipped up and rolled over each other all in a yelling heap, gather their legs together, and stretch away with fierce cries after poor puss, who is going off like a race-horse, with her black shadow on the snow.

We are wild, frantic with the excitement, and whoop

and screech with delight, as we follow, throwing each other down in the jostle, and leaving soon the smaller ones far behind.

"They are closing on her! she is down! Whoop! hurrah!"

"You sanch! you snap! get out, you dogs! get out! begone!" I shriek; but it is too late now to save poor puss from being torn.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE NATURALIST DEVELOPING.

When the crust had melted, then came tracking hares on the snow; and here Pompey and I were better than Milo's nose, for we could see the beautiful little triangles puss left behind with her feet at each bound, laid as plain along the snow as ink-marks on white paper.

Out from the cabbage-patch or the nursery we would follow it, winding round and round, through the fences and by the briar-patch, across the fields and away towards the wood, we would trail; bending down to look as we went, and keeping Milo back behind us. Now the edge of the wood is reached, and here the track gets all mixed up with others, and twisted back upon itself, so that for a long time we

cannot make it out; but Pompey strikes a circuit round in the wood, and after a while he shouts—

"Here he is, Massa Charles! Got her again!

Away we tramp—Pompey as eager on the new trail as any hound—crashing through hazel thickets —falling over buried logs and grape vines—to be up and scramble on again until—"Ha!—that great old oak tree! That's the place—see, the tracks go right into the hollow at its root."

"We've got her! we've got her!"

Matches were not known in those days, but we had a little steel and flint, with some tinder, between us, and now soon we had scraped away the snow to get at the dry leaves, and broken off all the dead boughs and twigs we could find around for a heap—a great heap at the mouth of the hole.

It was very hard to keep Milo's nose out, for snuff and snuff he would in spite of us, when we turned our backs. Now the tinder burns—the pile is fired, and then we throw on damp leaves to make a great smoke to rise up the hollow. Milo stands by, looking on with a very wise expectation—but Pompey kneels by his side, and holds him round the neck tight. In a little while we hear snuff! snuff! and scrambling inside the hollow! Now she comes! thump! sneeze! There she bursts through the smoking pile stifling and helpless. I seize her quickly.

"Down, Milo! down! Hold him, Pompey!" as I wheel round and round to escape him, swinging poor

puss above my head. Now she has got her breath again. How sad her wail is! But, after a desperate struggle, Milo is beat off, and she is saved.

By the time the snow was gone, my attic had become populous enough; but when the busy, gay, and glowing spring had come, and the carolling out of doors, and the warm, deepening green, and the faint odours of the youngest flowers came stealing on the air, the prisoners there grew so restless and looked so out of place in their bare wooden cages, that day by day compunctious visitings grew upon me, until one after one, with many a yearning sigh as I looked after them, all were turned loose upon the sunny earth again. I would be saddened for days to think of their ingratitude, for no one of them ever came back to me again.

Sorrows could not last long in those days. The sap ran vigorously, and new pleasures soon grew over the old scars. My pets were all gone, but with the same spring that wooed their freedom came nesting-time.

Ah, what an eye I had for localities most apt to be selected by my wild favourites to build their homes in. I was seldom taken by surprise in finding any nest. I could almost tell beforehand the very fork, thickly clustered round with veiling leaves, in which Master Jay would wisely hide his clumsy house.

I knew the very limb out near the end of which

the robin meant to build. I could tell the very stump or hollow which yonder twittering pair of blue-birds would select; I could tell before I reached yonder dead young mulberry, whether it was a tom-tit's populous nursery that had filled that sap-sucker's deserted chamber, or whether I might expect, when I tapped its sounding sides, to see the great soft black eyes and trembling whiskers of the velvety flying squirrel fill the round little hole, before she darted out to sail down on the creamy spread of her furred drapery. As for the red-crested flicker with his spotted breast, who loved this kind of house too, I knew his droll ways almost as well as his better-half herself, and many a sunshiny morning have I sat beneath and mocked his noisy laugh and hammering rattle.

I knew the screech-owl stood to blink and stare on sleepy watch the livelong day, out from his door in that old hollow beech that held his little family of horned goblins warm within; and where the robber hawk circled on moveless wing with plaintive cries at noonday, I knew his savage heart was yearning towards that huge oak's clustering top below; and if eagles eyried on the cliff, I told it when I saw them stealing quickly in.

It was no mystery to me where the shy flame-bird hid its eggs; nor could the artist hummer, with all its matchless skill, deceive me, for the moss-cloaked bulb, that seemed so like the gradual swelling of a

natural knot upon the twig, revealed its delicate secret to my sharpened eye. And the meek, simple dove, I patronised especially, and visited her each day, to watch lest some rude boy or prowling cat had marked the low and exposed nest where the silly thing had placed it on an apple-tree limb, right across the orchard path; and respecting the wren, I believe she would have built in my coat-sleeve, had I given her half a chance!

The blue-martin and I knew each other's faces from spring to autumn; for many a friendly and familiar gossip did we hold together from my attic window, that overlooked the little painted palace I had set up for it on a pole outside.

Ah, that fatal structure, with its red walls of painted brick! its mimic turrets saw my first deed of wanton cruelty.

These purple martins I most dearly loved, because they brought me from the south the first news of spring, in their glad, low twitterings, and I placed this house there for them to occupy in welcome to their weary wings. But the little warlike blue-bird would take possession first, and cruelly buffet the tired wanderer when it came to claim its own; then my anger was excited at witnessing the inhospitable deed, for the blue-bird was no stranger, and lived here through the winter.

I pled now with my father for a gun. By one tremendous effort, I learned to say my multiplication

table backwards, to win it as a reward, and then grasping the bright new weapon, after more than one attempt, I fired my first successful shot, and slew the intruder, as it fluttered in triumph above the house it had usurped.

What a strange sensation it was as I lifted that first victim of my prowess, and saw the blood upon my hands. I look back upon it now with sorrow, for from that moment the fierce impulse of the hunter was aroused, to grow apace, untempered by the soft pity with which these creatures, endowed with the same gift of life as ourselves, should be regarded.

The king-bird knew me for a foe, and would ruffle his vermillion crest at the very sight of me; but when he screamed his defiance as he fell before my aim, and pecked and clawed at me to the last gasp, my respect was aroused, and I stood over him, sorrowing for my hasty wrath. But such compunctious visitings became less and less frequent with each new deed of thoughtless cruelty; and I learned even to look on such as acts of just retribution.

How my cheek paled when a warning cry from some watchful singer would hush all the timid choir around, and with a sudden swoop the hawk hurled down amidst the scattering throng; and then the flushing heat, as I grasped my gun! His strong flight swerves to the report!—a shriek of baffled fierceness, and he is whirling prone to earth.

No errant knight did ever press his mailed foot at last on slain dragon's scaly neck, with more exulting consciousness, than I in that proud moment of victory.

I was a daring climber, too, in those days. A trunk, thirty feet to the branches, was a mere stimulant to me, especially if I had espied a gray squirrel's summer pavilion swinging to the breeze upon its lofty top.

When I had mounted, what a joy it was, rocking with undizzied brain from topmost fork, to look out over the upheaving, restless ocean of green leaves, and hear their low murmurings go by! They filled me with a strange exulting, and I would rock my perilous perch to and fro, until it swung me in delicious motion, like a sea-bird lifted on the storm-tossed waves.

Many a flogging has climbing for such a swing, or for a bird's nest, cost me, laid on with little mercy by a captious pedagogue. Ah, boys who loved the green-wood better than the horn-book saw hard times in my young days.

For a long time I shrank from the companionship of the rude boys of my own age who were my schoolfellows; for, fresh from home, where bird voices had mingled most with the gentle tones of playmate sisters, their recklessness of speech could but sound repulsive to my dainty sense. I scorned them, and they of course taunted me, until, my pride aroused, I

stood at bay with sullen desperation, and in many a fierce battle compelled respect for these same "womanish ways" of mine, as they had chosen to name them.

Now the ice was fairly broken: shocked by these rude collisions, out of Dream-land into the Real, I waked to sympathy with its rude and boisterous elements. Then came the glorious time of most ambitious feats. The spirit of rivalry once aroused, to what extreme would not the extravagant energies be hurled in their fierce lust of eminence! The pale wrestler, writhing with a stouter foe—the desperate runner, straining at a distant goal, with teeth clenched, lest he should pant and fall—the climber, taunted to a perilous feat, swinging some fearful gap, with flying bound from limb to limb, at dizziest height—the swimmer, breasting swollen torrents, with limbs beating vainly to advance—these were my playmates now, in reckless emulation! When Saturday came, and we scattered in hurrying troops over the rough hills, and away to seek adventure for this happy time, how dauntless and how strong were we! Dangers we loved for danger's sake, and shouted with joy to meet them.

Those holiday hours were indeed precious fragments; and how we revelled in them when they came! A year of enjoyment was crowded through those fast minutes into the day.

Away with the rising sun to the mill pond, six

miles off, with jackets slung over arms, and fishing-lines in pockets, we pattered along the bridle-path at the long swinging gait of an Indian runner—never pausing for breath in our merry chattering, since such time was too precious! We must be there in an hour, for the greatest fish bite early.

Here we are at last, as the wide burst of water, blazing in the morning sun, dazzles our eyes, accustomed to the shades. One shout of joyous greeting, and then to work. Quickly the long tapering poles are cut from the bordering thickets, bait for our small hooks produced, and in hurried eagerness the favoured spot secured. They are thrown in. Hey! hey! hurrah! a fluttering splash, and the first fish is landed amidst laughing congratulations, altogether at war with the favourite precepts of legitimate angling. But what care we for the shades of Cotton and Walton? The fish are too abounding and too eager to be frightened easily, and the noisy sport goes on.

When the noon comes with its sultry heats, we leave our finny sport for new refreshing in those cool depths. Delicious plunges! down! deep down, with eager eyes opened on the wave, to pierce its secrets—but in vain. Many an hour we struggled and plashed through the freshening waters, until the hot sun would scorch our exposed backs, and blister our skin. Evening, and the return through lengthening shadows with our burdens of fish carried between

us, found our flagging steps drag heavily on the hilly way, and the late moon rose behind the tall chimneys as the "Big House" came in welcome view.

Then there came, too, the long excursions in search for young squirrels through the trackless heart of the forest; or in the autumn to gather nuts; when, for either, we must climb the loftiest of the hoary trees, and that with a lithe daring that would have daunted soberer blood.

With the winter came new sports, more hardy still—the long night hunts by stealth with the younger negroes and their little cur dogs, for the sulky "'possum." That was great sport to begin with, for we seldom ventured far from the skirts of the plantation for fear of getting lost; and we were not yet old enough to be promoted to sharing the dangerous honours of the "coon" hunt with the grown negroes, because we could not keep up with their weary tramps.

But the opossum hunt was our own affair, and well we knew to manage it among ourselves. It all had to be done very quietly; and if a dog barked before we got clear out of ear-shot of the "Big House," he got well beat for it. We dreaded betrayal in the least sound, and even the chunk of fire carried by the biggest negro was carefully sheltered by our hats, lest its tell-tale gleam might be seen. Once round the turn and fairly in the woods, we

breathed freely, and might venture to raise our voices from the eager whispers of consultation to the more decided tones of decision and command, encouraging each other and the dogs; for darkness is a great damper upon both boys and dogs.

Now we may cheer, and even whoop, as we are beginning to enter the forest, where opossums resort to feast upon the fruits, and the old hare keeps his form, too, in the long grass and briar patches; and every now and then, with a sudden burst of screeching yelps, the little curs break away after a bounding fellow, which they soon lose in the thickets. We do not care for these interruptions, for the little dogs cannot trail them far, and soon lose them in doubling through the briars. We have no fear that the noise they make will spoil our sport a great deal, for the sluggish opossum does not care to trust much to its heels to run away.

Hark, a low, wary yelp, quick, short, half-smothered with hesitation and eagerness! There it goes, the gathering cry! yelp, screech, whine! They are bursting to let go their voices. Hurrah! the shrill yell rises from every throat at once; curs, boys, negroes, screeching altogether in one sudden cry of exultation; then all is silent.

"Tree'd! tree'd!"—a short, sullen bark is followed by another and another, as each dog comes up, and smelling at the tree, satisfies himself that all is right; now we plunge, tearing through the brush,

regardless of briars and thorns, in the direction of these sounds, and soon we hear the eager whining of the dogs through all the noise of their barking. We are very close now; and bursting through the thicket, come upon them, all leaping up against a fence-corner of the plantation; there, showing plain against the moon, and hanging by the tail from a limb of that bare tree over the fence, we see the great gray opossum savagely grinning at the scene below, with his long white teeth full bared. The excitement, no less than the ideas inculcated into us by our older companions, completely prevented any feelings of compassion for the poor hunted opossum from entering our breasts. Shouts of merry laughter greet the sight. Some point their fingers at him, some pelt him with rotten boughs caught up from the dry leaves at our feet; while the dogs yell louder still, and leaping against the tree, fall back in scrambles between our legs.

"Ha, yah! ole boy! what do dar, grinnin' at dat moon? Come out dat!" and up starts a young negro to shake him down.

"There he comes!" A simultaneous rush—screams, shrieks, growls, all mingled for an instant, while we beat off the dogs, and then he is swung in triumph by the tallest of the party above his head. Now the well-known trick of the opossum in feigning to be dead affords new amusement; and he is surrounded by his thoughtless tormentors, who, amid

noisy clamours, tease him in a thousand ingenious ways to make him show signs of life, though all but the most inexperienced ones take good care not to give him too good a chance to bite, which he sometimes does with severity while thus "playing 'possum."

Sometimes he is "tree'd" in a large tree, and then the fire must be built, and a serious job we have to get at him; but the attempt is seldom relinquished until success has attended it. The negroes take charge of the game on our return, and the next night there is a grand opossum roast at their quarter, in which we all participate.

To digress about our teacher: he was an eccentric person, who in his young days had acquired a fondness for teaching, which he had adopted then from necessity, but which continued to cling to him through his life, although his marriage had brought him a handsome fortune. He therefore kept up his school, rather as an amateur than from the necessities of the case. His plantation was a very extensive one, situated on the edge of a wild country, and his school the favoured and noted resort of the sons of the southern gentry, from far and wide.

He was a good old man, and loved us all as his own children. We were allowed much more license on parole of honour than was usual at such places; the old gentleman even took a grotesque sort of

pleasure, which he awkwardly attempted to conceal, in examining and commenting upon our game, the legitimate produce of our wild sports, except the night hunts, which were strictly interdicted. I shall remember his appearance on one occasion of this sort as long as I live.

We had made an unusually successful excursion to a distant mill pond one Saturday, and were very eager to exhibit to him our trophies, of which we were very proud. But as our excursion had been extended beyond the limits to which we were ordinarily required to restrict ourselves, we were a little afraid to parade our fish before him. There was one amongst the rest, however, a great white perch, or trout, as it was incorrectly called in that locality, of such extraordinary size, and with the capture of which, too, there was such a ridiculous story of my mishaps, that all my comrades were bursting with eagerness to tell it to Mr. Hinton.

They would not venture, however, to take the fish to him before breakfast, which was placed in a long and wide passage of the large house; the young fishers being oddly divided between the desire to communicate our adventure to him, and their fear of censure for breaking bounds. The fish, however, were hung in a grand cluster against a pillar which stood near the head of the table, in such a position that his eye must necessarily fall upon them as he took his accustomed position to pronounce the grace standing.

Now, Mr. Hinton was a person of genuine dignity of character, and we stood in great awe of the earnest solemnity of manner with which he always addressed himself to the observances of religion; but the story with regard to the capture of the great trout had got among the boys, and the sight of it, paraded so ostentatiously, now caused a general disposition to titter, which was even ill suppressed, as our teacher assumed his place. He had not chanced to notice it, and raising his hands reverently to ask a blessing on our meal, the habit of respect for his tall and commanding presence in these solemn functions for the instant hushed every one breathlessly.

No sooner did the good man close his eyes, than there was so general a movement of heads and hands, such whispering and noisy attempts to choke down laughter, that, with all his wonted solemnity, and the preoccupation of his mind in the duty of thanksgiving, he could not help hearing, and accordingly opened his eyes upon the most vivid tableaux conceivable, of grimaces and pointing fingers. Following the direction involuntarily, his eye rested first upon my unlucky self, and then upon the monster trout against the pillar, as the cause of this ill-timed hubbub. He started somewhat as his eye took in its size, and the severe frown gathering upon his brow was contradicted by a slight nervous twitch of relaxation at the corner of his mouth; our watchful eyes detected instantly this favourable sign,

and there was one general burst of smothered laughter from all sides, above which rose the stern command—

"Silence! what does this mean, young gentlemen?"

But it was too late now for authority to be regained at once, and peal after peal of unrestrainable laughter set order at defiance. But, fortunately for the delinquents, the good man's eyes seemed to wander abstractedly, drawn by some irresistible attraction towards the trout. Suddenly he muttered, as if to himself—

"That fish surely cannot weigh less than ten pounds!" and forgetting all our outrageous conduct for the moment, he strode across the passage, took down his little spring balance, which he always used for such purposes, and, to our increased amusement and delight, proceeded immediately to satisfy himself as to the weight.

"Twelve pounds!" he exclaimed, drawing a long breath. "Whew! Greatest trout ever taken at the Spring Pond in my memory!" Then replacing fish and scales, he turned and looked sharply along the table, while the hubbub was silenced in an instant. "You, Charles, Henry, Tom, you will all three remain after school to-morrow morning!"

This was said with a severity that chilled the hearts of those of us named, for remaining "after school" was well known to portend punishment of some sort.

However, by the time the terrible hour of judgment came, the whole story of the capture having reached his ears, he was evidently more disposed, at that awful moment, when all the other boys had vanished, and we were left alone with him to receive sentence, to laugh at the affair himself, than to be severe with us; so we got off with a slight reproof.

The incident which had caused so much fun was this: During the whole of Saturday there had been a match going on among us all, as to who should catch the largest fish. It so happened that I had either not been in the mood for fishing, or had been unfortunate, for I had caught little or nothing.

As evening closed, the party embarked in the boat to return across the pond, and were quizzing me most unmercifully for my poor success; and I in return was making empty boasts, which I had no dream of realizing, as I stood in the bow idly lashing the water with my line, that I would surely catch a larger fish than all theirs put together, before we reached the other shore. There was no bait on my hook, and there seemed surely no great probability of my performing any such miracle. Our boat was slowly winding among the buried logs, when suddenly, as my line dropped in our wake, the gleam of the leaden sinkers caught the eye of a huge fish which made its lair under the logs, and in a twinkling I was jerked head-foremost over the bow into the water, amidst the laughing shouts of my

companions. Some one shouted comfortingly in my ear, as I rose spluttering from the sudden plunge, "Ha! ha! I think the fish has caught you instead. Hold on to him, hold on!"

The fish was secured, after a desperate struggle with our united force; and as I was yet quite a little fellow, the joke of my having been "caught by the fish," was too good a one not to tell for a long time among my companions.

We had skating, too, in the winter, and many a wild scene there was when we were flying, like squads of swallows, hither and thither upon the ice. There were some winters when extraordinary floods came in the early part of the season, and then the whole forest on the lowest side of the plantation would be flooded, and its trunks stand several feet deep in the clear water. The change of a night or two would freeze this over suddenly—and then such a time!

The earliest dawn of Saturday found us afoot with preparation, for we had scarcely slept for eagerness through that long dull night of Friday. Such clanking of skates as we set off in a run, with a cold bite for breakfast in our hands, and some more stuffed into our pockets for dinner. This was too great a time to think much of eating.

Away we hurried across the wide bare fields, scrambling over the rough, hard-frozen ground in our thick boots, which made great noise in the crisp,

clear morning air. Fresh from the warm bed, we are almost cut in two at first by the cold winter's breath in its keen sweep across the open fields; but soon we reach the shelter of the wood, and then our blood comes glowing warm again. With eager shouts we greet the welcome scene; and a fire is built to warm our freezing fingers while the skates are fitted on.

Motion soon dispels the chill, and now with hardy eagerness we spring away in facile glide among the great trees, and soon we dart, and wind, and fly, as in that marvellous sense of motion without wings that sometimes visits us in dreams. How rapturous that wild ecstasy of speed! We flew past walls of trunks, run into each other—circled—whirling as winds are eddied, while the ringing of our steel-shod heels was responded to by our merry laughter.

So sped our lives, winter and summer, as a vision goes, until the time came at last when we must leave that old place, some of us for wider fields of busy strife, out in the great world of men, and others for college. With what fond regrets my memory revisits those rude and pleasant scenes.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE NIGHT HUNT IN RECESS.

WELL do I remember those turbulent times, when, having got somewhat up in my "teens," I took courage to think of a truant independence in college recess.

The "old folks," as I and sundry other young gentlemen of the neighbourhood were disposed to believe unanimously, were too close and particular. A declaration of independence had become necessary! not an open one, but a declaration of "*expediency!*" such a one as we could make without involving serious consequences.

For instance, our right to creep out of our windows when our seniors were a-bed, to keep "tryst" with the view of enjoying a moonlight expedition in a "coon" or "'possum" hunt with the negroes and their dogs.

As the time had come when we felt it necessary to make such doughty demonstrations, our measures were of course taken with due and necessary forecast.

Old Sambo, down at the Quarter,* the dingy Nim-

* On the plantations there are usually several villages, or settlements of the negroes, which are called "Quarters."

rod of darkness and the negroes, had first to be propitiated; and this done, we instantly convey the momentous news to sundry young companions, living near at hand, who are eagerly awaiting it.

The important night has arrived. The "old folks" have barely time to commence their first sleep, having taken it for granted that we are where dutiful and obedient sons should be at such an hour —in the land of Nod—when, by sundry silent exhibitions of our skill at escalading, we have made our escape from the precincts of authority, and are off to Sambo's Quarter, with fluttering hearts, beneath the uncertain starlight.

Now, as we had been prohibited from joining in "night hunts," on the ground that they injured our health, were dangerous, and that it was highly undignified that young gentlemen just from college should go out hunting with the servants, we of course felt that discovery would be attended with just the requisite amount of danger to give piquancy to the commencement of an enterprise.

If our pulse was quickened, our heels were not less so by such considerations. We pause at the several cross-paths on the way, to wait for the other young recusants who were to join us. One after another they come in, each usually attended by a favourite servant not far from his own age, who has been admitted to his confidence. Joyously enough we begin to talk as the distance between

us and the awful shadows of the "Big House" is increased.

The crossing of shadows to and fro shows that all at the Quarter are on the alert. We hear the subdued too-oot of a horn, and the low opening howl of the gathering dogs in answer. We begin to grow silent, and move faster.

Old Sambo sounds a shriller note upon his horn, the dogs rise from independent howls to a simultaneous yell, and along with all the young half-naked negroes rush to meet us. The women come to the doors with their blazing lamps lifted above their heads, that they may get a look at the "young masters," and we, shouting with excitement, and blinded by the light, plunge stumbling through the meeting current of dogs and young negroes, into the midst of the gathering party. Here we are suddenly arrested by a sort of awe as we find ourselves in the presence of old Sambo. The young dogs leap upon us with their dirty fore-paws, but we merely push aside their caresses, for old Sambo and his old dog Bose are the two centres of our admiration and interest.

Old Sambo is the "Mighty Hunter" of all that region. He is seamed and scarred with the siege of sixty winters! Upon all matters appertaining to such hunts, his word is "*law*." From his official position of commander-in-chief, he soon reduces the chaos around us into something like subjection, and

then in a little time comes forth the order of our night's march. A few stout young men who have obeyed his summons have gathered around him from the different huts of the Quarter—some with axes, and others with torches of pine and bark. The dogs become more restless, and we more excited, as these indices of immediate action appear.

Now, with a long blast from the cow's horn of Sambo, and a deafening clamour on all sides, from men, women, children, and dogs, we take up the line of march for the woods. Sambo leads, of course. We are soon trailing after him in single file, led by the glimmer of the torches far ahead.

Now the open ground of the plantation has been passed, and as we approach the deep gloom of the bordering forest, and enter its glades, the warning "hush" of Old Sambo gives notice that silence is requisite.

All is hushed now, except the rustle of our tramp over the dried autumn leaves, and occasional patter of the feet of a dog who ranges near to our path. Occasionally a white dog comes suddenly out of the darkness into view, and disappears as soon, leaving our imagination startled as if some curious sprite had come momentarily from out its silent haunts to peep at us. Then we hear the rustling of some rapid thing behind us, and looking round, see nothing; then spring aside with a nervous bound and fluttering pulse, as some black object brushes by our legs.

—"Nothing but dat dog, Nigger Trimbush," chuckles a negro, who has observed the half superstitious start.

Hark, a dog opens—another, then another! We are still in a moment, listening—all eyes are turned upon old Sambo the oracle. He only pauses for a minute.

"De pups—old dogs aint dar!" A pause. "Pshaw, nothing but an old hare!"—and a long, loud blast of the horn sounds the recall.

We move on—and now the frosty night air has become chilly, and we begin to feel that we have something before us to do. Our legs are plied too lustily for us to have time to talk. The young dogs have ceased to give tongue; for like unruly children, they have dashed off in chase of what came first.

Just when the darkness is most deep, and the sounds about our way most hushed up, rises the silver moon, and with a mellowed glory overcomes the night. The weight of darkness has been lifted from us, and we trudge along more cheerily! The dogs are making wider ranges, and in their absence old Sambo gives an occasional whoop of encouragement. We also would like to relieve our lungs, but he says, "Nobody must holler now but dem dat de dog knows." "*De dog*" means his own well-tried Bose, and we must of course be deferential to his humours!

Tramp, tramp, tramp, it has been for miles, and not a note from the dogs. We are beginning to be fatigued; our spirits sink, and we have visions of the warm room and bed we have deserted at home. One after another the young dogs come panting back to us, and fall lazily into our wake. When, hark! a deep-mouthed, distant bay! The sound is electrical; our impatience and fatigue are gone! All ears and eyes, we crowd around old Sambo, who leans forward with one ear turned towards the earth in the direction of the sound. Breathlessly we gaze upon him. Hark! another bay, another, then several join in. Then, as a hoarse, low bay comes booming to us through a pause, he bounds into the air with the caperish agility of a colt, and breaks out in ecstasy, "Whoop! whoop! dat's de ole dog, my Bose!" and striking hurriedly through the brush in the direction of the sounds, away we rush as fast as we can scramble through the underbrush of the thick wood. The loud burst of the whole pack opening together, drowns even the noise of our progress.

The cry of a full pack is maddening music to the hunter. Fatigue is forgotten, and obstacles are nothing. On we go, yelling in chorus with the dogs. Our direction is towards the swamp, and they are fast hurrying to its fastnesses. But what do we care! Briars and logs, the brush of dead trees, plunges half-leg deep into the watery mire of boggy places, are alike disregarded. We must be in at the

death! So away we scurry, led by the maddening chorus.

Suddenly the reverberations die away. Old Sambo halts. When we get into ear-shot the only word we hear is, "Tree'd!" This from the oracle is sufficient. We have another long scramble, in which we are led by the monotonous baying of a single dog.

We have reached the place at last all breathless. Our torches have been nearly extinguished. One of the young dogs is seated at the foot of a tree, and looking up, it bays incessantly. Old Sambo pauses to survey the scene. The old dogs are circling round and round, jumping up against the side of every tree, smelling as high as they can reach. They are not satisfied, and Sambo waits for *his* tried oracles to solve the mystery. He regards them steadily and patiently for a while; then steps forward quickly, and beats off the young dog who had "lied" at the tree.

The veterans now have a quiet field to themselves; and after some further delay in jumping up the sides of the surrounding trees to find the scent, they finally open in full burst upon the trail. Old Sambo exclaims curtly, as we set off in the new chase—

"Dat looks like coon!"

Now the whole pack opens again, and we are off after it. Like the racoon, this animal endeavours to baffle the dogs by running some distance up a

tree, and then springing off upon another, and so on until it can safely descend. The young dogs take it for granted that he is in the first tree, while the older ones sweep circling round and round until they are convinced that the animal has not escaped. They thus baffle the common trick which they have learned through long experience, and recovering the trail, renew the chase.

Under ordinary circumstances we would already have been sufficiently exhausted; but the magnetism of the scene lifts our feet as if they had been shod with wings. Another weary scramble over every provoking obstacle, and the solitary baying of a dog is heard again winding up the "cry."

When we reach the tree this time, and find it is another "feint," we are entirely disheartened; and all this excitement and fatigue of the night reacting upon us, leaves us utterly exhausted, and disinclined to trudge one foot further. Old Sambo comes up—he has watched with an astute look the movements of the dogs for some time.

"Thought dat were a ole coon from de fust! Dat's a mighty ole coon!" with a dubious shake of his head.

The dogs break out again at the same moment, and with peculiar fierceness, in full cry. "Come 'long, niggers—maby dat's a coon—maby 't aint!" and off he starts again.

We are electrified by the scenes and sounds once

more, and follow, forgetting everything in the renewed hubbub and excitement. Wearily now we go again over marsh and quagmire, bog and pond, rushing through vines and thickets and dead limbs. Ah, what glimpses have we of our cozy home during this wild chase! Now our strength is gone—we are chilled, and our teeth chatter—the moon seems to be the centre of cold as the sun is of heat, and its beams strike us like arrows of ice. Yet the cry of the dogs is onward, and old Sambo and his staff yell on.

Suddenly there is a pause! the dogs are silent, and we hold up. "Is it all lost?" we exclaim, as we stagger, with our bruised and exhausted limbs, to a seat upon an old log. The stillness is as deep as midnight—the owl strikes the watch with his too-whoo. Hah! that same hoarse, deep bay which first electrified us comes booming again through the stillness.

"Yah! old coon am done for. Bose got him now, niggers—come on!"

The inspiriting announcement, that Bose had tree'd the racoon at last, makes us once more forget all our fatigues, and we follow in the hurry-scurry rush to the tree. Arrived there, we find old Bose on end, barking up a great old oak, while the other dogs lie panting around. "Dare he am," says old Sambo. "Make a fire, niggers!" There is but a single stump of a torch left; but in a little while

they have collected dried wood enough to kindle a great blaze.

"Which nigger 's going to climb dat tree?" says old Sambo, looking round inquiringly. But nobody answers; and, throwing off his horn with an indignant gesture, he says: "You pack of chicken-hearted niggers!—climb de tree myself!" and straightway the wiry old man, with the activity of a boy, springs against the huge trunk, and commences to ascend the tree.

Bose gives an occasional low yelp as he looks after his master. The other dogs sit with upturned noses, and on restless haunches, as they watch his ascent.

Nothing is heard for some time but the fall of dead branches and bark which he throws down. The fire blazes high, and the darkness about us, beyond its light, is unpenetrated even by the moon. We stand in eager groups watching his ascent. He is soon lost to our view amongst the limbs; yet we watch on until our necks ache, while the eager dogs fidget on their haunches, and emit short yelps of impatience. We see him, against the moon, far up amongst the uppermost forks, creeping like a beetle —up, still up! We are all impatience—the whole fatigue and all the bruises of the chase forgotten! our fire crackles and blazes fiercely as our impatience, and sends quick tongues of light, piercing the dark forest about us.

Suddenly the topmost branches of the great oak begin to shake, and seem to be lashing the face of the moon.

"Look out down dar!" shouts Sambo. The dogs burst into an eager howl. He is shaking him off! A dark object comes thumping down into our midst. The eager dogs rush upon it! but we saw the spotted thing with the electric flashing of its eyes. Yells and sputtering screams, and the gnashing growls of assault, follow, as we all rush after the fray, and strike wildly into its midst, with the clubs and sticks we have snatched, when one of the negroes advances and with a single blow settles the poor victim of our long and weary chase.

All is over! We get home as we may, creep cautiously into our back window, and sleep not the less profoundly for our fatigue, that our late hour of rising next day is supposed to be chargeable on Bacon or the Iliad, instead of the "Night Hunt."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### AUDUBON—THE HUNTER-NATURALIST.

THE time had now come to my developed and overflowing passions, when tastes and energies thus nourished in wild seclusion should seek their legitimate direction.

And so they did, with a vengeance! For had the unconquerable instinct been wanting in my nature, there was one name that had so filled my mind, that it alone would have been sufficient to inspire me with strength to burst all bonds and rush away upon the same free track!

Audubon! Delightful name! Ah, do I not remember well the hold it took upon my young imagination, when I heard the rumour from afar, that there was a strange man abroad then, who lived in the wilderness with only his dog and gun, and did nothing day by day but follow up the birds; watching everything they might do; keeping in sight of them while light lasted; then sleeping beneath the tree where they perched, to be up and follow them again with the dawn, until he knew every habit and way that belonged to them; and then, sitting down on the mossy roots of an oak, would draw such marvellous pictures of birds as the world never saw before.

O what a happy, happy being that strange man must be, I used to think; and what a strong and brave one, too, to sleep out among the panthers and wild-cats, where the Indian whoop was heard—trusting only to his single arm and his faithful dog. I loved to speculate about that dog. He must be larger than my dog Milo, I thought, just about as gentle and true, but a *little* more knowing. How I envied him the happiness of such a master and longed to follow out just such a life!

I felt not envious, but a deep emulation was stirred within me. I vowed, in my inmost heart, that I would first see all those things for myself, with my own eyes, where and as he had seen them—out upon the broad face of the extended world; and then I could look upon his work, and know, with an appreciative knowledge, whether he had wrought these miracles or not.

This resolve at once gave tone to my after life. Many a tie was rent, and much agony endured by my friends, when I became a wanderer through wild and distant regions.

My restless step was everywhere; my eager eyes saw all that the great American continent could show. The grizzly bear and the tropic bird were equally known to me. The savage trooper and the Mexican slave have been familiars, as well as the fierce bandit, and the stern, simple-hearted hunter. Years of my earlier manhood passed in these erratic wanderings, till I had grown familiar with all wild, grotesque, and lonely creatures, that populate those solitudes of nature.

Landing one morning, in the course of my erratic journeys, at Pittsburgh, the Birmingham of America, after disposing of my luggage at the City Hotel, I proceeded to ascertain the most suitable means of prosecuting the journey I had then in view. I found the office of the "Canal Route" for Philadelphia, &c. was next door to the hotel, and I was tempted

to go in and book my name "clear through." The canal boat did not start till after dark, so that I spent the hours allotted to daylight in exploring the streets of this dim Cyclopeian city.

The incessant clang of sledge-hammers had become sufficiently monotonous when the evening closed in, and I was glad enough to take coach and be transported to the canal depot, where the usual vexations and delay had to be endured.

Finally, however, we got under weigh, with such a cargo of pigs, poultry, and human beings, as even canal boats have seldom accommodated. The captain summoned us all together, and informed us that every man, woman, and child aboard must stow him, her, or itself, away along the narrow walls, in the succession of their registration during the day. Now, it happened that I stood first upon the list, and was of course entitled to the first choice of hammocks. We panted in the centre of the close-jammed crowd, waiting till the ladies had been called off. As it happened that this right of choice was finally definitive for the route, and determined whether one should sleep upon a hammock, or the floor, or the tables, for several successive nights, it was a matter of no little moment.

It occurred while the ladies were being disposed of, that I heard above the buzz around me the name of Audubon spoken. My attention was instantly attracted by that magical sound. I listened in

breathless eagerness. I heard a gentleman near me say—"Mr. Audubon is last on the list; I fear he will not get a bed, we are so crowded."

I felt my heart leap.

"What," said I, leaning forward quickly, "is it possible Mr. Audubon can be on board? I thought he was still on his Rocky Mountain tour!"

"We are just returning, sir," said the gentleman courteously, half smiling, as he observed the excited expression of my face.

"You are joking, are you not?" said I, hardly able to realize so much happiness. "Where—Which is he?"

"He is actually in this very cabin," said he, turning full upon me.

"The man of all others in the world I wanted to see most," I ejaculated, half inwardly.

"Well, there he is," said the gentleman, laughing, as he pointed to a huge pile of green blankets and fur which I had before observed stretched upon one of the benches, and took to be the well-fitted bale of some western trader.

"What, *that* Mr. Audubon?" I exclaimed, naively.

"Yes; he is taking a nap."

At that moment my name was called out by the captain, as entitled to the first choice of berths.

"I waive my right in favour of Mr. Audubon," was my answer.

Now the green bale stirred a little—half turned

upon its narrow resting-place, and, after a while, sat erect, and showed me, to my no small surprise, that there was a man inside of it.

A patriarchal beard fell, white and wavy, down his breast; a pair of hawk-like eyes gleamed sharply out from the shroud of cap and collar. It was Audubon in his wilderness garb, hale and alert, with sixty winters upon his shoulders, fresh from where the floods are cradled amid crag-piled mountains or flowery plains.

Ah, how I venerated him! How I longed to know him, and to be permitted to sit at his feet and learn, and hear his own lips discourse of those loveable themes which had so absorbed my life.

I scarcely slept that night, for my brain was teeming with novel and happy images. I determined to stretch to the utmost the traveller's license, and approach him in the morning. My happy fortune in having been able to make the surrender in his favour, assisted me, or else his quick eye detected at once the sympathy of our tastes: be that as it may, we were soon on good terms.

Like all men who have lived much apart with nature, he was not very talkative. His conversation was impulsive and fragmentary: that, taken together with a mellow Gallic idiom, rendered his style peculiarly captivating to a curious listener, eager to get at his stores of knowledge, and compare his own diffuse but extended observation with his profound accuracy.

The hours of that protracted journey glided by us in a dream.

He had several new and curious animals along with him, which he had taken in those distant wilds where I had myself seen them in their freedom, and now they looked like old acquaintances to me; and I soon got up an intimacy with the swift fox, the snarling badger, and the Rocky Mountain deer. He exhibited to me some of the original drawings of the splendid work on the zoology of the continent, which his sons are now engaged in bringing out. I recognized in them the miraculous pencil of the "Birds of America." I also observed several personal traits that interested me very much.

The confinement we were subjected to on board the canal boat was very tiresome to his habits of freedom. We used to get ashore and walk for hours along the tow-path ahead of the boat; and I observed with astonishment, that, though above sixty, he could outwalk me with ease.

His physical energies seemed entirely unimpaired. Another striking evidence of this he gave me. A number of us were standing grouped around him, on the top of the boat, one clear sunshiny morning; we were at the same time passing through a broken and very picturesque region; his keen eyes, with an abstracted, intense expression, an expression of looking over the heads of men around him, out into nature, peculiar to them, were glancing over the

scenery as we glided through, when suddenly he pointed with his finger towards the fence of a field, several hundred yards off, with the exclamation—

"See! yonder is a fox-squirrel running along the top rail! It is not often I have seen them in Pennsylvania."

Now, his power of vision must have been singularly acute, to have distinguished that it was a *fox*-squirrel at such a distance; for only myself and one other person out of a dozen or two, who were looking in the same direction, detected the creature at all, and we could barely distinguish that there was some object moving on the rail. I asked him curiously, if he was sure of its being a *fox*-squirrel. He smiled, and flashed his hawk-like glance upon me, as he answered—

"Ah, I have an Indian's eye!" And I had only to look into it to feel that he had.

These are slight but peculiar traits, in perfect keeping with his general characteristics, as the naturalist and the man. Of course I never permitted that acquaintance to fall through while he lived, and amidst the many and wearisome vicissitudes which have befallen me since, I have retained fresh and unimpaired the memory of that journey through the mountains, as one of the green places of the past, where the sunlight always lives.

Thus it was I came first to meet the hunter-naturalist—old Audubon. Now that he is dead, and

I can look upon his career with sober vision, I still think that in all the world's history of wonderful men, there is not to my mind one story of life so filled with beautiful romance as that of J. J. Audubon, considered in the mere details of its facts. Take them in his own simple words as furnished by himself incidentally, in the text of his great work, and what a wondrous tale it is! In his charming preface to the "Biography of Birds," written in March 1831, he says of himself:—

"I received life and light in the New World. When I had hardly yet learned to walk, and to articulate those first words always so endearing to parents, the productions of Nature that lay spread all around were constantly pointed out to me. They soon became my playmates; and before my ideas were sufficiently formed to enable me to estimate the difference between the azure tints of the sky and the emerald hue of the bright foliage, I felt that an intimacy with them, not consisting of friendship merely, but bordering on frenzy, must accompany my steps through life; and now, more than ever, am I persuaded of the power of those early impressions. They laid such hold upon me, that, when removed from the woods, the prairies, and the brooks, or shut up from the view of the wide Atlantic, I experienced none of those pleasures most congenial to my mind. None but aerial companions suited my fancy. No roof seemed so secure to me as that formed of

the dense foliage under which the feathered tribes were seen to resort, or the caves and fissures of the massy rocks to which the dark-winged cormorant and the curlew retired to rest, or to protect themselves from the fury of the tempest. My father generally accompanied my steps, procured birds and flowers for me with great eagerness—pointed out the elegant movements of the former, the beauty and softness of their plumage, the manifestations of their pleasure or sense of danger—and the always perfect forms and splendid attire of the latter. My valued preceptor would then speak of the departure and return of birds with the seasons, would describe their haunts, and, more wonderful than all, their change of livery; thus exciting me to study them, and to raise my mind towards their great Creator.

"A vivid pleasure shone upon those days of my early youth, attended with a calmness of feeling that seldom failed to rivet my attention for hours, whilst I gazed in ecstasy upon the pearly and shining eggs, as they lay embedded in the softest down, or among dried leaves and twigs, or were exposed upon the burning sand or weather-beaten rock of our Atlantic shores. I was taught to look upon them as flowers yet in the bud. I watched their opening, to see how Nature had provided each different species with eyes, either open at birth, or closed for some time after; to trace the slow progress of the young birds toward perfection, or admire the celerity with which some of

them, while yet unfledged, removed themselves from danger to security.

"I grew up, and my wishes grew with my form. Those wishes were for the entire possession of all that I saw. I was fervently desirous of becoming acquainted with nature. For many years, however, I was sadly disappointed, and for ever, doubtless, must I have desires that cannot be gratified. The moment a bird was dead, however beautiful it had been when in life, the pleasure arising from the possession of it became blunted; and although the greatest cares were bestowed in endeavours to preserve the appearance of nature, I looked upon its vesture as more than sullied, as requiring constant attention and repeated mendings, while, after all, it could no longer be said to be fresh from the hands of its Maker. I wished to possess all the productions of nature, but I wished life with them. This was impossible. Then what was to be done? I turned to my father, and made known to him my disappointment and anxiety. He produced a book of *Illustrations*. A new life ran in my veins. I turned over the leaves with avidity; and although what I saw was not what I longed for, it gave me a desire to copy nature. To nature I went, and tried to imitate her, as in the days of my childhood I had tried to raise myself from the ground and stand erect, before nature had imparted the vigour necessary for the success of such an undertaking.

"How sorely disappointed did I feel for many years, when I saw that my productions were worse than those which I ventured (perhaps in silence) to regard as bad in the book given me by my father. My pencil gave birth to a family of cripples. So maimed were most of them, that they resembled the mangled corpses on a field of battle, compared with the integrity of living men. These difficulties and disappointments irritated me, but never for a moment destroyed the desire of obtaining perfect representations of nature. The worse my drawings were, the more beautiful did I see the originals. To have been torn from the study would have been as death to me. My time was entirely occupied with it. I produced hundreds of these rude sketches annually; and for a long time, at my request, they made bonfires on the anniversaries of my birth-day.

"Patiently and with industry did I apply myself to study; for, although I felt the impossibility of giving life to my productions, I did not abandon the idea of representing nature. Many plans were successively adopted, many masters guided my hand. At the age of seventeen, when I returned from France, whither I had gone to receive the rudiments of my education; my drawings had assumed a form. David had guided my hand in tracing objects of large size. Eyes and noses belonging to giants, and heads of horses represented in ancient sculpture, were my models. These, although fit subjects for men intent

on pursuing the higher branches of the art, were immediately laid aside by me. I returned to the woods of the New World with fresh ardour, and commenced a collection of drawings, which I henceforth continued, and which is now publishing under the title of 'The Birds of America.'

"In Pennsylvania, a beautiful State, almost central on the line of our Atlantic shores, my father, in his desire of proving my friend through life, gave me what Americans call a beautiful 'plantation,' refreshed during the summer heats by the waters of the Schuylkill river, and traversed by a creek named Perkioming. Its fine woodlands, its extensive fields, its hills crowned with evergreens, offered many subjects to my pencil. It was there that I commenced my simple and agreeable studies, with as little concern about the future as if the world had been made for me. My rambles invariably commenced at break of day; and to return wet with dew, and bearing a feathered prize, was, and ever will be, the highest enjoyment for which I have been fitted.

"Yet, think not, reader, that the enthusiasm which I felt for my favourite pursuits was a barrier opposed to the admission of gentler sentiments. Nature, which had turned my young mind toward the bird and the flower, soon proved her influence upon my heart. Be it enough to say, that the object of my passion has long since blessed me with the name of

husband. And now let us return, for who cares to listen to the love-tale of a naturalist, whose feelings may be supposed to be as light as the feathers which he delineates.

"For a period of nearly twenty years, my life was a succession of vicissitudes. I tried various branches of commerce, but they all proved unprofitable, doubtless because my whole mind was ever filled with my passion for rambling and admiring those objects of nature from which alone I received the purest gratification. I had to struggle against the will of all who at that period called themselves my friends. I must here, however, except my wife and children. The remarks of my other friends irritated me beyond endurance, and, breaking through all bonds, I gave myself up entirely to my pursuits. Any one acquainted with the extraordinary desire which I then felt of seeing and judging for myself, would doubtless have pronounced me callous to every sense of duty, and regardless of every interest. I undertook long and tedious journeys, ransacked the woods, the lakes, the prairies, and the shores of the Atlantic. Years were spent away from my family. Yet, reader, will you believe it, I had no other object in view than simply to enjoy the sight of nature. Never for a moment did I conceive the hope of becoming in any degree useful to my kind, until I accidentally formed acquaintance with Charles Lucien Bonaparte, the Prince of Musignano, at Philadelphia,

to which place I went, with the view of proceeding eastward along the coast.

"In April 1824, I sought for patronage in Philadelphia, and failing there, went to New York, with some better success; but weary and depressed, on the whole, I returned to nature for refreshment, and, ascending that noble stream, the Hudson, glided over our broad lakes, to seek the wildest solitudes of the pathless and gloomy forests.

"It was in these forests that, for the first time, I communed with myself as to the possible event of my visiting Europe again; and I began to fancy my work under the multiplying efforts of the graver. Happy days, and nights of pleasing dreams. I read over the catalogue of my collection, and thought how it might be possible for an unconnected and unaided individual like myself to accomplish the grand scheme.

"Eighteen months elapsed. I returned to my family, then in Louisiana, explored every portion of the vast woods around, and at last sailed towards the Old World. But before we visit the shores of hospitable England, I have the wish to give you some idea of my mode of executing my drawings.

"Merely to say that each object of my illustrations is of the size of nature, were too vague—for to many it might only convey the idea that they are so, more or less, according as the eye of the delineator may have been more or less correct in measurement

simply obtained through that medium; and of avoiding error in this respect I am particularly desirous. Not only is every object, as a whole, of the natural size, but also every portion of each object. The birds, almost all of them, were shot by myself, after I had examined their motions and habits as much as the case admitted, and were regularly drawn on or near the spot where I procured them. The positions may, perhaps, in some instances appear *outré;* but such supposed exaggerations can afford subject of criticism only to persons unacquainted with the feathered tribes; for, believe me, nothing can be more transient or varied than the attitudes or positions of birds. The heron, when warming itself in the sun, will sometimes drop its wings several inches, as if they were dislocated; the swan may often be seen floating with one foot extended from the body; and some pigeons turn quite over when playing in the air.

"An accident which happened to two hundred of my original drawings, nearly put a stop to my researches in ornithology. I shall relate it, merely to show you how far enthusiasm—for by no other name can I call the persevering zeal with which I laboured—may enable the observer of nature to surmount the most disheartening obstacles. I left the village of Henderson, in Kentucky, situated on the bank of the Ohio, where I resided for several years, to proceed to Philadelphia on business. I looked to all my

drawings before my departure, placed them carefully in a wooden box, and gave them in charge to a relative, with injunctions to see that no injury should happen to them. My absence was of several months; and when I returned, after having enjoyed the pleasures of home for a few days, I inquired after my box, and what I was pleased to call my treasure. The box was produced, and opened; but, reader, feel for me: a pair of Norway rats had taken possession of the whole, and had reared a young family amongst the gnawed bits of paper, which, but a few months before, represented nearly a thousand inhabitants of the air.

"The burning heat which instantly rushed through my brain was too great to be endured, without affecting the whole of my nervous system. I slept not for several nights, and the days passed like days of oblivion; until the animal powers being recalled into action, through the strength of my constitution, I took up my gun, my note-book, and my pencils, and went forth to the woods as gaily as if nothing had happened. I felt pleased that I might now make much better drawings than before, and ere a period not exceeding three years had elapsed, I had my portfolio filled again.

"America being my country, and the principal pleasures of my life having been obtained there, I prepared to leave it with deep sorrow, after in vain trying to publish my illustrations in the United

States. In Philadelphia, Wilson's principal engraver, amongst others, gave it as his opinion to my friends, that my drawings could never be engraved. In New York other difficulties presented themselves, which determined me to carry my collections to Europe.

"As I approached the coast of England, and for the first time beheld her fertile shores, the despondency of my spirits became very great. I knew not an individual in the country; and, although I was the bearer of letters from American friends and statesmen of great eminence, my situation appeared precarious in the extreme. I imagined that every individual whom I was about to meet might be possessed of talents superior to those of any on our side of the Atlantic. Indeed, as I for the first time walked on the streets of Liverpool, my heart nearly failed me, for not a glance of smypathy did I meet in my wanderings for two days. To the woods I could not betake myself, for there were none near."

Well received in England, Audubon proceeded to Scotland.

The noble work of Wilson had not long been finished then, and men were not done wondering at this glorious achievement of the Paisley weaver, who had left their own shores years ago, a poor and obscure adventurer, for the forests of the New World, when another pilgrim from those far wildernesses,

made his appearance among the learned circles of the Scottish capital. He carried a portfolio under his arm, and came, too, on an adventure to this seat of wealth and mental culture. There was a look of Nature's children about him. His curled and shining hair, thrown back from his open front, fell in dark clusters down his broad shoulders. Those bold features, those sharp, steady eyes, that straight figure and elastic tread, were a strange blending of the red man and the pure-blooded noble. A curious trader he! But, when his wondrous wares were all unfolded and spread out before their eyes, what a thrilling of amazement and delight was felt through those fastidious circles! It was a surprising revelation, and when they knew that it had all been the work—the obscure, unaided work, through years of toil—of that young wanderer, they were filled with overwhelming admiration. They loaded him with honours; they took him by the hand generously, and helped him to his success.

Such was the effect of Audubon's appearance in Edinburgh. In that portfolio men felt that a great creation lay unfolded; in that modest backwoodsman they saw the first of the hunter-naturalists.

But it is not on his triumphal progress through Europe that we prefer to accompany him. Nor is it of so much interest to us to hear that such men as Cuvier and Humboldt pronounced his work on birds the most magnificent monument art had yet erected

to ornithology. The world has long ago taken charge of his fame. It is the man, the hunter-naturalist out in the wilderness, that we would know more intimately. It is rather the methods of the workman that we would now see—for it is well enough known that never in the annals of individual achievement, did unaided enthusiasm, through poverty and neglect, accomplish so much, single-handed against such odds.

The world, by the way, has been told many times of the immense pecuniary difficulties to be overcome by him from the commencement; but not yet, perhaps, in his own touching language, have they heard some of the effects of these struggles upon his temper and feelings. He says, in the introduction to the third volume:—

"Ten years have now elapsed since the first number of my 'Illustrations of the Birds of America' made its appearance. At that period I calculated that the engravers would take sixteen years in accomplishing their task; and this I announced in my prospectus, and talked of to my friends. Of the latter not a single individual seemed to have the least hope of my success, and several strongly advised me to abandon my plans, dispose of my drawings, and return to my country. I listened with attention to all that was urged on the subject, and often felt deeply depressed, for I was well aware of many of the difficulties to be surmounted, and perceived that no small sum of money would be

required to defray the necessary expenses. Yet never did I seriously think of abandoning the cherished object of my hopes. When I delivered the first drawings to the engraver, I had not a single subscriber. Those who knew me best called me rash; some wrote to me that they did not expect to see a second fasciculus; and others seemed to anticipate the total failure of my enterprise. But my heart was nerved, and my reliance on that Power on whom all must depend brought bright anticipations of success.

"Having made arrangements for meeting the first difficulties, I turned my attention to the improvement of my drawings, and began to collect from the pages of my journals the scattered notes which referred to the habits of the birds represented by them. I worked early and late, and glad I was to perceive that the more I laboured the more I improved. I was happy, too, to find, that in general each succeeding plate was better than its predecessor; and when those who had at first endeavoured to dissuade me from undertaking so vast an enterprise, complimented me on my more favourable prospects, I could not but feel happy. Number after number appeared in regular succession, until, at the end of four years of anxiety, my engraver, Mr. Havell, presented me with the first volume of the 'Birds of America.'

"Convinced, from a careful comparison of the plates, that at least there had been no falling off in the execution, I looked forward with confidence to the termi-

nation of the next four years' labour. Time passed on, and I returned from the forests and wilds of the Western world to congratulate my friend Havell, just when the last plate of the second volume was finished.

"About that time, a nobleman called upon me with his family, and requested me to show them some of the original drawings, which I did with the more pleasure that my visiters possessed a knowledge of ornithology. In the course of our conversation, I was asked how long it might be until the work should be finished. When I mentioned eight years more, the nobleman shrugged up his shoulders, and sighing, said, 'I may not see it finished, but my children will, and you may please to add my name to your list of subscribers.' The young people exhibited a mingled expression of joy and sorrow, and when I with them strove to dispel the cloud that seemed to hang over their father's mind, he smiled, bade me be sure to see that the whole work should be punctally delivered, and took his leave. The solemnity of his manner I could not forget for several days; I often thought that neither might I see the work conpleted; but at length I exclaimed, 'My sons may.' And now that another volume, both of my illustrations and of my biographies, is finished, my trust in Providence is augmented, and I cannot but hope that myself and my family together may be permitted to see the completion of my labours."

How that confidence has been answered, the facts since, with which the world is familiar, have shown.

He obtained one hundred and eighty subscribers to the work, at one thousand dollars each; and lived not only to complete it, surrounded by his sons, but, as I have already mentioned, had by their aid commenced and even completed another great work on the Quadrupeds of America.

It is not the least extraordinary characteristic of this man's unexampled career, that he should, until even late in life, have been entirely unconscious of the powers he possessed. Indeed, he repeatedly asserts, that it was not until his meeting with Charles Lucien Bonaparte, on his visit to Philadelphia in 1824, that he had any thought whatever of publishing, or dreamed that he had been accomplishing anything very extraordinary. Bonaparte was astonished, in looking over his portfolios of drawings, and exclaimed, in an irrepressible burst of admiration and wonder at the simplicity of his unconsciousness—

"Mr. Audubon, do you know that you are a great man—a very great man!—the greatest ornithologist in the world!"

It was this language that first filled him with the thought of publishing, which, as we have seen, on his retirement to the solitudes of nature near the sources of the Hudson, became gradually nourished into a purpose. But let us see the most touching instance of this unconsciousness in his own relation of the manner of his first interview with Wilson, the ornithologist. He lived for two years in Louisville, Kentucky, which

was then a comparatively small town. He was engaged in business as a merchant or trader, yet nevertheless he says :—

"During my residence at Louisville, much of my time was employed in my ever favourite pursuits. I drew and noted the habits of everything which I procured, and my collection was daily augmenting, as every individual who carried a gun always sent me such birds or quadrupeds as he thought might prove useful to me. My portfolios already contained upwards of two hundred drawings.

"One fair morning, I was surprised by the sudden entrance into our counting-room of Mr. Alexander Wilson, the celebrated author of the 'American Ornithology,' of whose existence I had never until that moment been apprized. This happened in March 1810. How well do I remember him, as he then walked up to me! His long rather hooked nose, the keenness of his eyes, and his prominent cheek-bones, stamped his countenance with a peculiar character. His dress, too, was of a kind not usually seen in that part of the country—a short coat, trousers, and a waistcoat of gray cloth. His stature was not above the middle size. He had two volumes under his arm, and as he approached the table at which I was working, I thought I discovered something like astonishment in his countenance. He, however, immediately proceeded to disclose the object of his visit, which was to procure subscriptions for his work. He opened his

books, explained the nature of his occupations, and requested my patronage.

"I felt surprised and gratified at the sight of his volumes, turned over a few of the plates, and had already taken a pen to write my name in his favour, when my partner rather abruptly said to me in French, 'My dear Audubon, what induces you to subscribe to this work? Your drawings are certainly far better, and again, you must know as much of the habits of American birds as this gentleman.' Whether Mr. Wilson understood French or not, or if the suddenness with which I paused disappointed him, I cannot tell; but I clearly perceived that he was not pleased. Vanity and the encomiums of my friend prevented me from subscribing. Mr. Wilson asked me if I had many drawings of birds. I rose, took down a large portfolio, laid it on the table, and showed him, as I would show any other person fond of such subjects, the whole of the contents, with the same patience with which he had shown me his own engravings.

"His surprise appeared great, as he told me he never had the most distant idea that any other individual than himself had been engaged in forming such a collection. He asked me if it was my intention to publish, and when I answered in the negative, his surprise seemed to increase. And, truly, such was not my intention; for, until long after, when I met the Prince of Musignano in Philadelphia, I had not the least idea of presenting the fruits of my labours to

the world. Mr. Wilson now examined my drawings with care, asked if I should have any objections to lending him a few during his stay, to which I replied that I had none; he then bade me good morning, not, however, until I had made an arrangement to explore the woods in the vicinity along with him, and had promised to procure for him some birds, of which I had drawings in my collection, but which he had never seen.

"It happened that he lodged in the same house with us, but his retired habits, I thought, exhibited either a strong feeling of discontent, or a decided melancholy. The Scotch airs which he played sweetly on his flute made me melancholy too, and I felt for him. I presented him to my wife and friends, and seeing that he was all enthusiasm, exerted myself as much as was in my power to procure for him the specimens which he wanted. We hunted together, and obtained birds which he had never before seen; but I did not subscribe to his work, for even at that time my collection was greater than his."

When the noble work of Wilson, the unknown Scotchman, began to make its appearance, ornithology was in its infancy in America, and the freshness of his hardy original genius was promptly recognised and keenly relished abroad. It was at once perceived how much the attractiveness of his subject was heightened by the circumstances of his personal intimacy and association with the creatures

described in many of the conditions of natural freedom.

His fine descriptions had a savour of the wilderness about them. His birds were living things, and led out the fancy through the scenes of nature to recognise them in their own wild homes, singing to the solitude from some chosen spray, or plying on busy wings their curious sports and labours.

It was a happy era in natural history, when art had linked its remoter teachings to the hearts of men; and to Wilson belongs the glory of having fairly pioneered its ushering. It is impossible to regard the labours of this man, even in a purely scientific light, without astonishment; but when we take into consideration all the pitiable afflictions entailed upon him in early life, we are lost in affectionate admiration of his indomitable genius.

Spirits with the vigour in them his possessed, ask only the vital air of freedom. Difficulties then are nothing. It is no wonder, when those trophies which he had wrestled for alone with nature here in her bare and unhoused wilds, and had won through trials and poverty, unassisted, had been returned to Scotland, his native country should be tempted to exalt him perhaps too highly, and claim for him even more than his just due.

Though Wilson displayed the noblest elements of greatness, in the staunch, unconquerable vigour with which he met the difficulties in his path, Audubon

exhibited quite as much indomitable perseverance; and in the proportionable grandeur of his scheme, had fully as many trials to surmount.

Moreover, while the drawings of Wilson are an advance upon all that had yet been accomplished, are free and accurate in outline, and sometimes even elegant in finish, yet those of Audubon must be acknowledged to be greatly superior to them.

Wilson's pencil has been content with a mere portraiture, correct, indeed, of proportion, and a colour barely suggestive; but the pencil of Audubon has not only caught the play of sunlight on the birds from each particular fibre of their plumes, but has pictured them to us in all the character of passionate life—their loves, battles, chases, gambols, thefts—the grotesqueness and grace, every mode and mood of their being amidst their native scenes. Each plate is a full-length family portrait, with all the accessories historical. They are perfect in themselves, and tell the whole story more clearly than words could do.

Audubon's great work, says Professor Wilson, was indeed a perilous undertaking for a stranger in Britain, without the patronage of powerful friends, and with no very great means of his own—all of which he embarked in the enterprise dearest to his heart. Had it failed, Audubon would have been a ruined man; and that fear must have sometimes dismally disturbed him, for he was not alone in life, and was a man of strong family affections. But happily those

nearest his breast were as enthusiastic in the love of natural science as himself, and were all willing to sink or swim with the beloved husband and venerated father. America may well be proud of him—and he has gratefully recorded the kindness he has experienced from so many of her most distinguished sons.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### AUDUBON AND BOONE.

I TURN from Audubon and his triumphs amid courtly scenes of the Old World, surrounded by the princely and the learned, to the hunter-naturalist at his labours in the wilderness of the New—the associate of the rugged Boone, and many other skin-dressed peers.

We may gather from his generous exhortation to younger naturalists to take the field, interesting indications of what may be supposed to have been his own method of conducting his investigations when abroad with nature—something of the sort of training by which his remarkable character was formed, and the modes and circumstances under which his works grew. After saying that the list of new species had been nearly doubled since the time of Alexander Wilson's work, and that he felt confident very many species remain to be added by future

observers, who shall travel the vast wastes extending northward and westward from the Canadas, and along the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains from Nootka to California—indeed, that he looks upon the whole range of those magnificent mountains as being yet unexplored—he addresses the young enthusiast:—

"Therefore I would strongly advise you to make up your mind, shoulder your gun, muster all your spirits, and start in search of the interesting unknown, of which I greatly regret I can no more go in pursuit—not for want of will, but of the vigour and elasticity necessary for so arduous an enterprise.

"Now, supposing that you are full of ardour and ready to proceed, allow me to offer you a little advice. Leave nothing to memory, but note down all your observations with ink, not with a black lead pencil; and keep in mind, that the more particulars you write at the time, the more you will recollect afterwards. Work not at night, but anticipate the morning dawn, and never think for an instant about the difficulties of ransacking the woods, the shores, or the barren grounds, nor be vexed when you have traversed a few hundred miles of country without finding a single new species. It may, indeed it not unfrequently happens, that after days, or even weeks of fruitless search, one enters a grove, or comes upon a pond, or forces his way through the tall grass of a prairie, and suddenly meets with several objects, all new, all beautiful, and perhaps all suited to the palate. Then

how delightful will be your feelings, and how marvellously all fatigue will vanish.

"Think, for instance, that you are on one of the declivities of the Rocky Mountains, with shaggy and abrupt banks on each side of you, while the naked cliffs tower high over-head, as if with the wish to reach the sky. Your trusty gun has brought to the ground a most splendid American pheasant, weighing fully two pounds! What a treat! You have been surprised at the length of its tail; you have taken the precise measurement of all its parts, and given a brief description of it. Now you have begun your drawing of this precious bird. Now then, you skin the beautiful creature, and you are pleased to find it plump and fat. You have laid it on the ignited embers, and it is now almost ready to satisfy the longing of your stomach, as it hisses in its odorous sap. The brook at your feet affords the very best drink that nature can supply, and I need not wish you better fare than that before you.

"Next morning you find yourself refreshed and reinvigorated, more ardent than ever, for success fails not to excite the desire of those who have entered upon the study of nature. You have packed your bird's skin flat in your box, rolled up your drawing round those previously made, and now, day after day, you push through thick and thin, sometimes with success, and sometimes without; but you at last return with such a load on your shoulders as I have

often carried on mine. Having once more reached the settlements, you relieve your tired limbs by mounting a horse, and at length gaining a city, find means of publishing the results of the journey."

It requires very little exertion of fancy to see in this a felicitous sketch of Audubon's own mode of "ransacking the woods, the shores, and the barren grounds."

It is just in such hardy methods that the immeasurable superiority of Mr. Audubon over the whole old school of stuffed-specimen delineators consists.

The idea of mounting knapsack and gun, and trudging thousands of miles through brake and morass, over sands, shores, and desert wildernesses, encountering and braving many perils purely for love of nature and scientific accuracy, would have made one of these philosophical amateurs shudder. To bespatter black coat and silken hose, get half-starved, and catch a death-cold in collecting materials, were simply preposterous, when the Zoological Gardens are close at hand, and the museums are filled with specimens. To be sure they have been dead for years, and owe their present forms very much to the taste of the ignorant tradesman who stuffed them. But the colours are there; they do not fade—not much at least—and by a slight exertion of fancy it will be easy enough to make them birds again.

Contrast such proceedings with the language of a man who knew what he was doing. It was during

those weary wanderings in which Audubon spent his best years in the woods, that in the far south he met with the "Caracara Eagle," then a new bird to him. He says:—

"I was not aware of the existence of the Caracara or Brazilian eagle in the United States until my visit to the Floridas, in the winter of 1831. On the 24th of November of that year, in the course of an excursion near the town of St. Augustine, I observed a bird flying at a great elevation, and almost over my head. Convinced that it was unknown to me, and bent on obtaining it, I followed it nearly a mile, when I saw it sail towards the earth, making for a place where a group of vultures were engaged in devouring a dead horse. Walking up to the horse, I observed the new bird had alighted on it, and was helping itself freely to the savoury meat beneath its feet; but it evinced a degree of shyness far greater than that of its associates, the turkey buzzards and carrion crows. I moved circuitously, until I came to a deep ditch, along which I crawled, and went as near to the bird as I possibly could; but finding the distance much too great for a sure shot, I got up suddenly, when the whole of the birds took to flight. The eagle, as if desirous of forming acquaintance with me, took a round and passed over me. I shot, but to my great mortification missed it. However, it alighted a few hundred yards off, in an open savanna, on which I laid myself flat on the ground, and crawled

towards it, pushing my gun before me, amid burs and mud-holes, until I reached the distance of about seventy-five yards from it, when I stopped to observe its attitudes. The bird did not notice me; he stood on a lump of flesh, tearing it to pieces in the manner of a vulture, until he had nearly swallowed the whole. Being now less occupied, he spied me, erected the feathers of his neck, and, starting up, flew away, carrying the remainder of his prey in his talons. I shot a second time, and probably touched him; for he dropped his burden, and made off in a direct course across the St. Sebastian river, with alternate sailings and flappings, somewhat in the manner of a vulture, but more gracefully. He never uttered a cry, and I followed him wistfully with my eyes until he was quite out of sight.

"The following day the bird returned, and was again among the vultures, but at some distance from the carcass, the birds having been kept off by the dogs. I approached by the ditch, saw it very well, and watched its movements, until it arose, when once more I shot, but without effect. It sailed off in large circles, gliding in a very elegant manner, and now and then diving downwards and rising again.

"Two days elapsed before it returned. Being apprised by a friend of this desired event, instead of going after it myself, I despatched my assistant, who returned with it in little more than half an hour. I immediately began my drawing of it. The weather

was sultry, the thermometer being at 89°; and, to my surprise, the vivid tints of the plumage were fading much faster than I had ever seen them in like circumstances, insomuch that Dr. Bell of Dublin, who saw it when fresh, and also when I was finishing the drawing twenty-four hours after, said he could scarcely believe it to be the same bird. How often have I thought of the changes which I have seen effected in the colours of the bill, legs, eyes, and even the plumage of birds, when looking on imitations which I was aware were taken from stuffed specimens, and which I well knew could not be accurate! The skin, when the bird was quite recent, was of a bright yellow. Its stomach contained the remains of a bull-frog, numerous hard-shelled worms, and a quantity of horse and deer hair. The skin was saved with great difficulty, and its plumage had entirely lost its original lightness of colouring. The deep red of the fleshy parts of the head had assumed a purplish livid hue, and the spoil scarcely resembled the coat of the living eagle.

"I made a double drawing of this individual, for the purpose of showing all its feathers, which I hope will be found to be accurately represented."

This is the way in which one of the truest naturalists who ever delineated form of bird, beast, or creeping thing, considered it necessary to labour in his vocation, and this is his opinion about the evanescence of colours in the dead subjects, and, as is of

course implied, of the undoubtedly wide play for the fancy in replacing them.

Hear, too, his account of the study of water-birds. He says:—

"The difficulties which are to be encountered in studying the habits of our water-birds are great. He who follows the feathered inhabitants of the forests and plains, however rough or tangled the paths may be, seldom fails to obtain the object of his pursuit, provided he be possessed of due enthusiasm and perseverance. The land-bird flits from bush to bush, runs before you, and seldom extends its flight beyond the range of your vision. It is very different with the water-bird, which sweeps afar over the wide ocean, hovers above the surges, or betakes itself for refuge to the inaccessible rocks on the shore. There, on the smooth sea-beach, you see the lively and active sandpiper; on that rugged promontory, the dusky cormorant; under the dark shade of yon cypress, the ibis and heron; above you, in the still air, floats the pelican or the swan; while far over the angry billows scour the fulmar and the frigate-bird. If you endeavour to approach these birds in their haunts, they betake themselves to flight, and speed to places where they are secure from your intrusion.

"But the scarcer the fruit, the more prized it is; and seldom have I experienced greater pleasures than when on the Florida Keys, under a burning sun, after pushing my bark for miles over a soapy

flat, I have striven all day long, tormented by myriads of insects, to procure a heron new to me, and have at length succeeded in my efforts. And then how amply are the labours of the naturalist compensated, when, after observing the wildest and most distrustful birds, in their remote and almost inaccessible breeding places, he returns from his journeys, and relates his adventures to an interested and friendly audience."

It is thus only that the miraculous fidelity which characterizes Audubon's whole work, could have been attained. His life is full of such incidents. It was indeed a habit from which he never deviated throughout the long years of his faithful dedication to his art, to make his drawings, if possible, on the very spot where the specimens had been obtained, without regard to heat, or cold, or storm. In making his drawings of the golden eagle, his incessant application through many hours of hurried labour, without rest, threw him into a violent fit of illness which nearly cost him his life. In many other instances he suffered greatly. He sometimes worked, while in Labrador, until the pencil absolutely dropped from his stiffened fingers, frozen in that bitter air; and in the South, his exposures to the opposite extremes were quite as great.

But it is by contrasting his own accounts of his visit to Labrador and the Florida Keys, that we will best be enabled to apprehend the zeal of his outdoor labours in these widely-separated regions. A

visit to Labrador, which is the nesting-ground of a vast number of our migratory birds, having become necessary for the continuation of his work, only the first volume of which had as yet issued, he chartered a small vessel, the "Ripley," at Eastport, Maine, for the purpose, and, accompanied by four young gentlemen fond of natural history and adventure, set sail for the North. He thus describes his outfit and mode of life on board and ashore:—

"We had purchased our stores at Boston, with the aid of my generous friend Dr. Parkman of that city; but unfortunately many things necessary on an expedition like ours were omitted. At Eastport, in Maine, we therefore laid in these requisites. No traveller, let me say, ought to neglect anything that is calculated to insure the success of his undertaking, or to contribute to his personal comfort, when about to set out on a long and perhaps hazardous voyage. Very few opportunities of replenishing stores of provision, clothing, or ammunition, occur in such a country as Labrador; and yet, we all placed too much confidence in the zeal and foresight of our purveyors at Eastport. We had abundance of ammunition, excellent bread, meat, and potatoes; but the butter was quite rancid, the oil only fit to grease our guns, the vinegar too liberally diluted with cider, the mustard and pepper deficient in due pungency. All this, however, was not discovered until it was too late to be remedied. Several of the young men were not clothed as hunters

should be, and some of the guns were not so good as we could have wished. We were, however, fortunate with respect to our vessel, which was a notable sailer, did not leak, had a good crew, and was directed by a capital seaman.

"The hold of the schooner was floored, and an entrance made to it from the cabin, so that in it we had a very good parlour, dining-room, drawing-room, library, &c.—all those apartments, however, being united into one. An extravagantly elongated deal table ranged along the centre; one of the party had slung his hammock at one end, and in its vicinity slept the cook, and a lad who acted as armourer. The cabin was small; but being fitted in the usual manner with side-berths, was used for a dormitory. It contained a small table and a stove, the latter of diminutive size, but smoky enough to discomfit a host. We had adopted, in a great measure, the clothing worn by the American fishermen on that coast—namely, thick blue cloth trousers, a comfortable waistcoat, and a pea-jacket of blanket. Our boots were large, round-toed, strong, and well studded with large nails to prevent sliding on the rocks. Worsted comforters, thick mittens, and round broad-brimmed hats, completed our dress, which was more picturesque than fashionable. As soon as we had an opportunity, the boots were exchanged for Esquimaux mounted mocassins of seal-skin, impermeable to water, light, easy, and

fastening at top, about the middle of the thigh, to straps, which, when buckled about the waist, secured them well. To complete our equipment, we had several good boats, one of which was extremely light and adapted for shallow water.

"No sooner had we reached the coast and got into harbour, than we agreed to follow certain regulations intended for the general benefit. Every morning the cook was called before three o'clock. At half-past three breakfast was on the table, and everybody equipped. The guns, ammunition, botanical boxes, and baskets for eggs or minerals, were all in readiness. Our breakfast consisted of coffee, bread, and various other materials. At four, all, except the cook and one seaman, went off in different directions, not forgetting to carry with them a store of cooked provisions. Some betook themselves to the islands, others to the deep bays; the latter, on landing, wandered over the country until noon, when, laying themselves down on the rich moss, or sitting on the granite rock, they would rest for an hour, eat their dinner, and talk of their successes or disappointments. I often regret that I did not take sketches of the curious groups formed by my young friends on such occasions; and when, after returning at night, all were engaged in measuring, weighing, comparing, and dissecting the birds we had procured—operations which were carried on with the aid of a number of candles thrust into the

necks of bottles. Here one examined the flowers and leaves of a plant, there another explored the recesses of a diver's gullet, while a third skinned a gull or a grouse. Nor was our journal forgotten. Arrangements were made for the morrow, and at twelve we left matters to the management of the cook, and retired to our roosts.

"If the wind blew hard, all went on shore, and, excepting on a few remarkably rainy days, we continued our pursuits much in the same manner during our stay in the country. Never was there a more merry set. In our leisure hours, some with the violin and flute accompanied the voices of the rest, and few moments were spent in idleness. Before a month had elapsed, the spoils of many a fine bird hung around the hold; shrubs and flowers were in the press, and I had several drawings finished, some of which you have seen, and of which I hope you will ere long see the remainder. Large jars were filling apace with the bodies of rare birds, fishes, quadrupeds, and reptiles, as well as molluscous animals. We had several pets too, gulls, cormorants, guillemots, puffins, hawks, and a raven. In some of the harbours curious fishes were hooked in our sight, so clear was the water.

"We found that camping out at night was extremely uncomfortable, on account of the annoyance caused by flies and musquitoes, which attacked the hunters in swarms at all times, but more especially

when they lay down, unless they enveloped themselves in thick smoke, which is not much more pleasant. On the coast of Labrador granite and green moss are spread around—silence like that of the grave envelopes all; and when night has closed the dreary scene from your sight, the wolves, attracted by the scent of the remains of your scanty repast, gather around you. Cowards as they are, they dare not venture on a charge; but their howlings effectually banish sleep. You must almost roast your feet to keep them warm, while your head and shoulders are chilled by the blast. When morning comes, she smiles not on you with rosy cheeks, but appears muffled in a gray mantle of cold mist, which shows you that there is no prospect of a fine day.

"Before we left Labrador, several of my young friends began to feel the want of suitable clothing. The sailor's ever-tailoring system was fairly put to the test. Patches of various colours ornamented knees and elbows; our boots were worn out; our greasy garments and battered hats were in harmony with our tanned and weather-beaten faces; and had you met with us, you might have taken us for a squad of wretched vagrants; but we were joyous in the expectation of a speedy return, and exulted at the thoughts of our success.

"As the chill blast that precedes the winter's tempest thickened the fogs on the hills, and ruffled

the dark waters, each successive day saw us more anxious to leave the dreary wilderness of grim rocks and desolate moss-clad valleys. Unfavourable winds prevented us for a while from spreading our white sails, but at last one fair morning smiled on the wintry world, the Ripley was towed from the harbour, her tackle trimmed, and as we bounded over the billows we turned our eyes towards the wilds of Labrador, and heartily bade them farewell for ever!"

Audubon had previously visited the Florida coast, alone, in 1831 and 1832, and during this expedition penetrated to the interior by the St. John's River. All this southern region, but particularly the "Keys," is, like Labrador, of peculiar interest to the ornithologist, as the resort of myriads of water-fowl and tropical birds of extraordinary splendour. He says:

"While in this part of the peninsula, I followed my usual avocations, although with little success, it being then winter. I had letters from the secretaries of the Navy and Treasury of the United States, to the commanding officers of vessels of war of the revenue service, directing them to afford me any assistance in their power; and the schooner Spark having come to St. Augustine, on her way to the St. John's River, I presented my credentials to her commander, Lieutenant Piercy, who readily and with politeness received me and my assistants on board. We soon after set sail with a fair breeze.

The strict attention to duty on board even this small vessel of war afforded matter of surprise to me. Everything went on with the regularity of a chronometer; orders were given, answered to, and accomplished, before they ceased to vibrate on the ear. The neatness of the crew equalled the cleanliness of the white planks of the deck; the sails were in perfect condition; and, built as the Spark was, for swift sailing, on she went, gambolling from wave to wave.

"I thought that, while thus sailing, no feeling but that of pleasure could exist in our breasts; but, alas! how fleeting are our enjoyments. When we were almost at the entrance of the river the wind changed, the sky became clouded, and before many minutes had elapsed, the little bark was lying to "like a duck," as her commander expressed himself. It blew a hurricane. At the break of day we were again at anchor within the bar of St. Augustine.

"Our next attempt was successful. Not many hours after we had crossed the bar, we perceived the star-like glimmer of the light in the great lantern at the entrance of the St. John's River. This was before daylight; and as the crossing of the sand-banks or bars which occur at the mouths of all the streams of this peninsula is difficult, and can be accomplished only when the tide is up, one of the guns was fired as a signal for the government pilot. The good man, it seemed, was unwilling to leave

his couch, but a second gun brought him in his canoe alongside. The depth of the channel was barely sufficient. My eyes, however, were not directed towards the water, but on high, where flew some thousands of snowy pelicans, which had fled affrighted from their resting-grounds. How beautifully they performed their broad gyrations, and how matchless, after a while, was the marshalling of their files as they flew past us!

"On the tide we proceeded apace. Myriads of cormorants covered the face of the waters, and over it fish-crows innumerable were already arriving from their distant roosts. We landed at one place to search for the birds whose charming melodies had engaged our attention, and here and there we shot some young eagles to add to our store of fresh provisions. The river did not seem to me equal in beauty to the fair Ohio; the shores were in many places low and swampy, to the great delight of the numberless herons that moved along in gracefulness, and the grim alligators that swam in sluggish sullenness. In going up a bayou, we caught a great number of the young of the latter, for the purpose of making experiments upon them.

"In the morning when I arose, the country was covered with thick fogs, so that although I could plainly hear the notes of the birds on shore, not an object could I see beyond the bowsprit, and the air was close and sultry, as on the previous evening.

We went on shore, where we found the vegetation already far advanced. The blossoms of the jessamine, ever pleasing, lay steeped in dew; the humming-bee was collecting her winter's store from the snowy flowers of the native orange; and the little warblers frisked along the twigs of the smilax. Now, amid the tall pines of the forest, the sun's rays began to force their way, and as the dense mists dissolved in the atmosphere, the bright luminary at length shone forth. We explored the woods around, guided by some friendly live-oakers who had pitched their camp in the vicinity. After a while the Spark again displayed her sails, and as she silently glided along, we espied a Seminole Indian approaching us in his canoe. The poor dejected son of the woods has spent the night in fishing, and the morning in procuring the superb-feathered game of the swampy thickets; and with both he comes to offer them for our acceptance. I cannot avoid admiring the perfect symmetry of his frame, as he dexterously throws on our deck the trouts and turkeys which he has captured. He receives a recompense, and without smile or bow, or acknowledgment of any kind, off he starts with the speed of an arrow from his own bow.

"Alligators were extremely abundant, and the heads of the fishes which they had snapped off lay floating around on the dark waters. A rifle bullet was now and then sent through the eye of one of the largest, which, with a tremendous splash of its tail,

expired. One morning we saw a monstrous fellow lying on the shore. I was desirous of obtaining him to make an accurate drawing of his head, and, accompanied by my assistant and two of the sailors, proceeded cautiously towards him. When within a few yards, one of us fired and sent through his side an ounce ball, which tore open a hole large enough to receive a man's hand. He slowly raised his head, bent himself upwards, opened his huge jaws, swung his tail to and fro, rose on his legs, blew in a frightful manner, and fell to the earth. My assistant leaped on shore, and, contrary to my injunctions, caught hold of the animal's tail, when the alligator, awakening from his trance, with a last effort crawled slowly towards the water, and plunged heavily into it. Had he thought of once flourishing his tremendous weapon, there might have been an end of his assailant's life, but he fortunately went in peace to his grave, where we left him, as the water was too deep.

"Early one morning I hired a boat and two men, with the view of returning to St. Augustine by a short cut. Our baggage being placed on board, I bade adieu to the officers, and off we started. About four in the afternoon we arrived at the short cut, forty miles distant from our point of departure, and where we had expected to procure a waggon, but were disappointed. So we laid our things on the bank, and, leaving one of my assistants to look after

them, I set out, accompanied by the other, and my Newfoundland dog. We had eighteen miles to go; and as the sun was only two hours high, we struck off at a good rate. Presently we entered a pine barren. The country was as level as a floor; our path, although narrow, was well beaten, having been used by the Seminole Indians for ages, and the weather was calm and beautiful. Now and then a rivulet occurred, from which we quenched our thirst, while the magnolias and other flowering plants on its banks relieved the dull uniformity of the woods. When the path separated into two branches, both seemingly leading the same way, I would follow one while my companion took the other, and unless we met again in a short time, one of us would go across the intervening forest.

"The sun went down behind a cloud, and the south-east breeze that sprung up at this moment sounded dolefully among the tall pines. Along the eastern horizon lay a bed of black vapour, which gradually rose, and soon covered the heavens. The air felt hot and oppressive, and we knew that a tempest was approaching. Plato was now our guide, the white spots on his skin being the only objects that we could discern amid the darkness, and as if aware of his utility in this respect, he kept a short way before us on the trail. Had we imagined ourselves more than a few miles from the town, we would have made a camp, and remained under its

shelter for the night; but conceiving that the distance could not be great, we resolved to trudge along.

"Large drops began to fall from the murky mass overhead; thick, impenetrable darkness surrounded us, and to my dismay, the dog refused to proceed. Groping with my hands on the ground, I discovered that several trails branched out at the spot where he lay down, and when I had selected one, he went on. Vivid flashes of lightning streamed across the heavens, the wind increased to a gale, and the rain poured down upon us like a torrent. The water soon rose on the level ground so as almost to cover our feet, and we slowly advanced, fronting the tempest. Here and there a tall pine on fire presented a magnificent spectacle, illumining the trees around it, and surrounded with a halo of dim light, abruptly bordered with the deep black of the night. At one time we passed through a tangled thicket of low trees, at another crossed a stream flushed by the heavy rain, and again proceeded over the open barrens.

"How long we thus, half lost, groped our way, is more than I can tell you; but at length the tempest passed over, and suddenly the clear sky became spangled with stars. Soon after we smelt the salt-marshes, and walking directly towards them, like pointers advancing on a covey of partridges, we at last, to our great joy, descried the light of the beacon near St. Augustine. My dog began to run briskly

around, having met with ground on which he had hunted before, and taking a direct course, led us to the great causeway that crosses the marshes at the back of the town. We refreshed ourselves with the produce of the first orange-tree that we met with, and in half an hour more arrived at our hotel. Drenched with rain, steaming with perspiration, and covered to the knees with mud, you may imagine what figures we cut in the eyes of the good people, whom we found snugly enjoying themselves in the sitting-room. Next morning, Major Gates, who had received me with much kindness, sent a waggon with mules, and two trusty soldiers, for my companion and luggage."

Availing himself of his letters again, Audubon now went on board a revenue cutter, the Marion.

"As the Marion neared the inlet called 'Indian Key,' situated on the eastern coast of the peninsula of Florida," says Audubon, "my heart swelled with uncontrollable delight. Our vessel once over the coral reef that everywhere stretches along the shore like a great wall reared by an army of giants, we found ourselves in safe anchoring ground, within a few furlongs of the land. The next moment saw the oars of a boat propelling us towards the shore, and in brief time we stood on the desired beach.

"Students of nature spend little time in introductions, especially when they present themselves to persons who feel an interest in their pursuits. This

was the case with Mr. Thruston, the deputy-collector of the island, who shook us all heartily by the hand, and in a trice had a boat manned at our service. Accompanied by him, his pilot and fishermen, off we went, and, after a short pull, landed on a large Key. Few minutes had elapsed, when shot after shot might be heard, and down came whirling through the air the objects of our desire. One thrust himself into the tangled groves which covered all but the beautiful coral beach, that, in a continued line, bordered the island, while others gazed on the glowing and diversified hues of the curious inhabitants of the deep. I saw one of my party rush into the limpid element, to seize on a crab, that, with claws extended upwards, awaited his approach, as if determined not to give way. A loud voice called him back to the land, for sharks are as abundant along these shores as pebbles, and the hungry prowlers could not have got a more savoury dinner.

"The pilot, besides being a first-rate shot, possessed a most intimate acquaintance with the country. He had been a 'conch-diver,' and, no matter what number of fathoms measured the distance between the surface of the water and its craggy bottom, to seek for curious shells in their retreat seemed to him more pastime than toil. Not a cormorant or pelican, a flamingo, an ibis, or heron, had in his days formed its nest without his having marked the spot. In a word, he positively knew every channel that

led to these islands, and every cranny along their shores. For years his employment had been to hunt those singular animals called sea-cows or marratees, and he had conquered hundreds of them, merely, as he said, because the flesh and hide bring a fair price at Havanna. He never went anywhere to land without 'Long Tom,' which proved, indeed, to be a wonderful gun, and which made smart havoc when charged with 'groceries,' a term by which he designated the large shot which he used. In like manner, he never paddled his light canoe without having by his side the trusty javelin, with which he unerringly transfixed such fishes as he thought fit either for market or for his own use. In attacking turtles, netting, or overturning them, I doubt if his equal ever lived on the Florida coast. No sooner was he made acquainted with my errand than he freely offered his best services, and from that moment until I left Key West, he was seldom out of my hearing.

"While the young gentlemen who accompanied us were engaged in procuring plants, shells, and small birds, he tapped me on the shoulder, and, with a smile, said to me, 'Come along, I'll show you something better worth your while.' To the boat we betook ourselves, with the captain and only a pair of tars, for more, he said, would not answer. The yawl for a while was urged at a great rate, but as we approached a point, the oars were taken in, and the

pilot alone skulling, desired us to make ready, for in a few minutes we should have rare sport. As we advanced, the more slowly did we move, and the most profound silence was maintained, until, suddenly coming almost in contact with a thick shrubbery of mangroves, we beheld, right before us, a multitude of pelicans. A discharge of artillery seldom produced more effect,—the dead and wounded fell from the trees upon the water, while those unscathed flew screaming through the air in terror and dismay. 'There,' said he, 'did not I tell you so; is it not rare sport?' The birds, one after another, were lodged under the gunwales, when the pilot desired the captain to order the lads to pull away. Within about half a mile we reached the extremity of the Key. 'Pull away,' cried the pilot, 'never mind them on the wing, for those black rascals don't mind a little firing—now, boys, lay her close under the nests.' And there we were, with four hundred cormorants' nests over our heads. The birds were sitting, and, when we fired, the number that dropped as if dead, and plunged into the water, was such, that I thought by some unaccountable means or other we had killed the whole colony. You would have smiled at the loud laugh and curious gestures of the pilot. 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'almost a blank shot!' And so it was; for, on following the birds as one after another peeped up from the water, we found only a few unable to take to wing. 'Now,'

said the pilot, 'had you waited until I had spoken to the black villains, you might have killed a score or more of them.' On inspection, we found that our shots had lodged in the tough dry twigs of which these birds form their nests, and that we had lost the more favourable opportunity of hitting them, by not waiting until they rose. 'Never mind,' said the pilot, 'if you wish it, you may load your vessel with them in less than a week. Stand still, my lads; and now, gentlemen, in ten minutes you and I will bring down a score of them.' And so we did. As we rounded the island, a beautiful bird of the species, called Peale's Egret, came up and was shot. We now landed, took in the rest of our party, and returned to Indian Key, where we arrived three hours before sunset.

"The sailors and other individuals to whom my name and pursuits had become known, carried our birds to the pilot's house. His good wife had a room ready for me to draw in, and my assistant might have been seen busily engaged in skinning, while George Lehman was making a sketch of the lovely isle.

"Time is ever precious to the student of nature. I placed several birds in their natural attitudes, and began to outline them. A dance had been prepared also, and no sooner was the sun lost to our eye, than males and females, including our captain and others from the vessel, were seen advancing gaily towards

the house, in full apparel. The birds were skinned, the sketch was on paper, and I told my young men to amuse themselves. As to myself, I could not join in the merriment, for I had still to finish, not merely my outlines, but my notes respecting the objects seen this day.

"The room adjoining that in which I worked was soon filled. Two miserable fiddlers screwed their screeching silken strings—not an inch of catgut graced their instruments; and the bouncing of brave lads and fair lasses shook the premises to the foundation. One with a slip came down heavily on the floor, and the burst of laughter that followed echoed over the isle. Diluted claret was handed round to cool the ladies, while a beverage of more potent energies warmed their partners. After supper our captain returned to the Marion, and I, with my young men, slept in light swinging hammocks, under the eaves of the piazza.

It was the end of April, when the nights were short, and the days therefore long. Anxious to turn every moment to account, we went on board Mr. Thruston's boat at three next morning. Pursuing our way through the deep and tortuous channels that everywhere traverse the immense muddy flats that stretch from the outward Keys to the main, we proceeded on our voyage of discovery. Here and there we met with great beds of floating sea-weeds, which showed us that turtles were abundant there,

these masses being the refuse of their feeding. On talking to Mr. Thruston of the nature of these muddy flats, he mentioned that he had once been lost amongst their narrow channels for several days and nights, when in pursuit of some smugglers' boat, the owners of which were better acquainted with the place than the men who were along with him. Although in full sight of several of the Keys, as well as of the main land, he was unable to reach either, until a heavy gale raised the water, when he sailed directly over the flats, and returned home almost exhausted with fatigue and hunger. His present pilot often alluded to the circumstance afterwards, ending with a great laugh, and asserting that, had he been there, the rascals would not have escaped.

"The next morning was delightful. The gentle sea-breeze glided over the flowery isle, the horizon was clear, and all was silent, save the long breakers that rushed over the distant reefs. As we were proceeding towards some Keys, seldom visited by men, the sun rose from the bosom of the waters with a burst of glory that flashed on my soul the idea of that Power which called into existence so magnificent an object.

"The business of the day over, we secured ourselves from insects by means of musquito-nets, and were lulled to rest by the cacklings of the beautiful purple gallinules!

"When we had lain ourselves down in the sand to

sleep, the waters almost bathed our feet; when we opened our eyes in the morning, they were at an immense distance. Our boat lay on her side, looking not unlike a whale reposing on a mud-bank. The birds in myriads were probing their exposed pasture-ground. There great flocks of ibises fed apart from equally large collections of godwits, and thousands of herons gracefully paced along, ever and anon thrusting their javelin bills into the body of some unfortunate fish, confined in a small pool of water. Of fish-crows I could not estimate the number, but, from the havoc they made among the crabs, I conjecture that these animals must have been scarce by the time of next ebb. Frigate pelicans chased the jager, which himself had just robbed a poor gull of its prize; and all the gallinules ran with spread wings from the mud-banks to the thickets of the island, so timorous had they become when they perceived us.

"Surrounded as we were by so many objects that allured us, not one could we yet attain, so dangerous would it have been to venture on the mud; and our pilot having assured us that nothing could be lost by waiting, spoke of our eating, and, on this hint, told us that he would take us to a part of the island where 'our breakfast would be abundant, although uncooked.' Off we went, some of the sailors carrying baskets, others large tin pans and wooden vessels, such as they use for eating their

meals in. Entering a thicket of about an acre in extent, we found on every bush several nests of the ibis, each containing three large and beautiful eggs, and all hands fell to gathering. The birds gave way to us, and ere long we had a heap of eggs that promised delicious food. Nor did we stand long in expectation, for, kindling a fire, we soon prepared, in one way or other, enough to satisfy the cravings of our hungry maws. Breakfast ended, the pilot, looking at the gorgeous sunrise, said, 'Gentlemen, prepare yourselves for fun, the tide is a-coming.'

"Over these enormous mud-flats, a foot or two of water is quite sufficient to drive all the birds ashore, even the tallest heron or flamingo, and the tide seems to flow at once over the whole expanse. Each of us, provided with a gun, posted himself behind a bush, and no sooner had the water forced the winged creatures to approach the shore, than the work of destruction commenced. When it at length ceased, the collected birds of different kinds looked not unlike a small haycock. Every one assisted in preparing the skins, and even the sailors themselves tried their hand at the work.

"Our pilot told us he was no hand at such occupations, and would go after something else. So taking Long Tom and his fishing-tackle, he marched off quietly along the shores. About an hour afterwards we saw him returning, when he looked quite exhausted, and, on our inquiring the cause, said,

'There is a dew-fish yonder and a few balacoudas, but I am not able to bring them, or even to haul them here; please send the sailors after them.' The fishes were accordingly brought, and, as I had never seen a dew-fish, I examined it closely, and took an outline of its form, which some day hence you may perhaps see. It exceeded a hundred pounds in weight, and afforded excellent eating. The balacouda is also a good fish, but at times a dangerous one, for, according to the pilot, on more than one occasion 'some of these gentry' had followed him when waist-deep in the water, in pursuit of a more valuable prize, until in self-defence he had to spear them, fearing that 'the gentleman' might at one dart cut off his legs, or some other nice bit, with which he was unwilling to part.

"Having filled our cask from a fine well long since dug in the sand of Cape Sable, either by Seminole Indians or pirates, no matter which, we left Sandy Isle about full tide, and proceeded homewards, giving a call here and there at different Keys, with the view of procuring rare birds, and also their nests and eggs. We had twenty miles to go 'as the birds fly,' but the tortuosity of the channels rendered our course fully a third longer. The sun was descending fast, when a black cloud suddenly obscured the majestic orb. Our sails swelled by a breeze that was scarcely felt by us, and the pilot, requesting us to sit on the weather gunwale, told us that we were

'going to get it.' One sail was hauled in and secured, and the other was reefed, although the wind had not increased. A low murmuring noise was heard, and across the cloud that now rolled along in tumultuous masses, shot vivid flashes of lightning. Our experienced guide steered directly across a flat towards the nearest land. The sailors passed their quids from one cheek to the other, and our pilot having covered himself with his oil-jacket, we followed his example. 'Blow, sweet breeze,' cried he at the tiller, and 'we'll reach land before the blast overtakes us, for, gentlemen, it is a furious cloud yon.'

"A furious cloud indeed was the one which now, like an eagle on outstretched wings, approached so swiftly, that one might have deemed it in haste to destroy us. We were not more than a cable's length from the shore, when, with imperative voice, the pilot calmly said to us: 'Sit quite still, gentlemen, for I should not like to lose you overboard just now; the boat can't upset, my word for that, if you will but sit still—here we have it!'

"Persons who have never witnessed a hurricane, such as not unfrequently desolates the sultry climates of the south, can scarcely form an idea of their terrific grandeur. One would think that, not content with laying waste all on land, it must needs sweep the waters of the shallows quite dry, to quench its thirst. No respite for an instant does it afford to the objects within the reach of its furious current.

"Our light bark shivered like a leaf the instant the blast reached her sides. We thought she had gone over; but the next instant she was on the shore. And now, in contemplation of the sublime and awful storm, I gazed around me. The waters drifted like snow; the tough mangroves hid their tops amid their roots, and the loud roaring of the waves driven among them blended with the howl of the tempest. It was not rain that fell; the masses of water flew in a horizontal direction, and where a part of my body was exposed, I felt as if a smart blow had been given me on it. But in half an hour it was over. The pure blue sky once more embellished the heavens, and although it was now quite night, we considered our situation a good one.

"The crew and some of the party spent the night in the boat. The pilot, myself, and one of my assistants, took to the heart of the mangroves, and, having found high land, we made a fire as well as we could, spread a tarpauling, and fixing our insect bars over us, soon forgot in sleep the horrors that had surrounded us.

"Next day the Marion proceeded on her cruise, and in a few more days, having anchored in another safe harbour, we visited other Keys, with similar objects in view."

Admitted by Nature to her most tender confidences, the hunter-naturalist seems also to have been chosen as the favoured intimate of her most

terrible moods. We have seen him here ride unharmed amidst the hurricane of the tropics, let us now turn to him standing secure, a looker-on, beside its fearful track in the West. He thus describes the scene:—

"I had left the village of Shawney, situated on the banks of the Ohio, on my return from Henderson, also on the banks of the same beautiful stream. The weather was pleasant, and I thought not warmer than usual at that season. My horse was jogging quietly along, and my thoughts were, for once at least in the course of my life, entirely engaged in commercial speculations. I had forded Highland Creek, and was on the eve of entering a tract of bottom land or valley that lay between it and Canoe Creek, when on a sudden I remarked a great difference in the aspect of the heavens. A hazy thickness had overspread the country, and I for some time expected an earthquake, but my horse exhibited no propensity to stop and prepare for such an occurrence. I had nearly arrived at the verge of the valley, when I thought fit to stop near a brook, and dismounted to quench the thirst which had come upon me.

"I was leaning on my knees, with my lips about to touch the water, when, from my proximity to the earth, I heard a distant murmuring sound of an extraordinary nature. I drank, however, and as I rose on my feet, looked towards the south-west,

where I observed a yellowish oval spot, the appearance of which was quite new to me. Little time was left me for consideration, as the next moment a smart breeze began to agitate the taller trees. It increased to an unexpected height, and already the smaller branches and twigs were seen falling in a slanting direction towards the ground. Two minutes had scarcely elapsed, when the whole forest before me was in fearful motion. Here and there, where one tree pressed against another, a creaking noise was produced, similar to that occasioned by the violent gusts which sometimes sweep over the country. Turning instinctively towards the direction from which the wind blew, I saw, to my great astonishment, that the noblest trees of the forest bent their lofty heads for a while, and, unable to stand against the blast, were falling into pieces. First, the branches were broken off with a crackling noise; then went the upper part of the massy trunks; and in many places whole trees of gigantic size were falling entire to the ground. So rapid was the progress of the storm, that before I could think of taking measures to insure my safety, the hurricane was passing opposite the place where I stood. Never can I forget the scene which at that moment presented itself. The tops of the trees were seen moving in the strangest manner, in the central current of the tempest, which carried along with it a mingled mass of twigs and foliage, that completely

obscured the view. Some of the largest trees were seen bending and writhing under the gale; others suddenly snapped across; and many, after a momentary resistance, fell uprooted to the earth. The mass of branches, twigs, foliage, and dust that moved through the air, was whirled onwards like a cloud of feathers, and on passing, disclosed a wide space filled with fallen trees, naked stumps, and heaps of shapeless ruins, which marked the path of the tempest. This space was about a fourth of a mile in breadth, and to my imagination resembled the dried-up bed of the Mississippi, with its thousands of planters and sawyers strewed in the sand, and inclined in various degrees. The horrible noise resembled that of the great cataracts of Niagara, and as it howled along in the track of the desolating tempest, produced a feeling in my mind which it were impossible to describe.

"The principal force of the hurricane was now over, although millions of twigs and small branches, that had been brought from a great distance, were seen following the blast, as if drawn onwards by some mysterious power. They even floated in the air for some hours after, as if supported by the thick mass of dust that rose high above the ground. The sky had now a greenish lurid hue, and an extremely disagreeable sulphureous odour was diffused in the atmosphere. I waited in amazement, having sustained no material injury, until nature at length resumed her wonted aspect. For some moments I

felt undetermined whether I should return to Morgantown, or attempt to force my way through the wrecks of the tempest. My business, however, being of an urgent nature, I ventured into the path of the storm, and after encountering innumerable difficulties, succeeded in crossing it. I was obliged to lead my horse by the bridle, to enable him to leap over the fallen trees, whilst I scrambled over or under them in the best way I could, at times so hemmed in by the broken tops and tangled branches, as almost to become desperate. On arriving at my house, I gave an account of what I had seen, when, to my surprise, I was told that there had been very little wind in the neighbourhood, although in the streets and gardens many branches and twigs had fallen in a manner which excited great surprise.

"Many wondrous accounts of the devastating effects of this hurricane were circulated in the country after its occurrence. Some log-houses, we were told, had been overturned, and their inmates destroyed. One person informed me that a wire-sifter had been conveyed by the gust to a distance of many miles. Another had found a cow lodged in the fork of a large half-broken tree. But, as I am disposed to relate only what I have myself seen, I shall not lead you into the region of romance, but shall content myself with saying that much damage was done by this awful visitation. The valley is yet a desolate place, overgrown with briars and bushes, thickly

entangled amidst the tops and trunks of the fallen trees, and is the resort of ravenous animals, to which they often betake themselves when pursued by man, or after they have committed their depredations on the farms of the surrounding district. I have crossed the path of the storm, at a distance of a hundred miles from the spot where I witnessed its fury, and again, four hundred miles farther off, in the state of Ohio. Lastly, I observed traces of its ravages on the summits of the mountains connected with the great pine forest of Pennsylvania, three hundred miles beyond the place last mentioned. In all these different parts, it appeared to me not to have exceeded a quarter of a mile in breadth."

Such are some of the experiences of the student of nature, who follows her into her secret haunts; one more example will exhibit him as the accepted playmate of the earthquake too:—

"Travelling through the Barrens of Kentucky," says Audubon, "in the month of November, I was jogging on one afternoon, when I remarked a sudden and strange darkness rising from the western horizon. Accustomed to heavy storms of thunder and rain, I took no more notice of it, as I thought the speed of my horse might enable me to get under shelter of the roof of an acquaintance, who lived not far distant, before it should come up. I had proceeded about a mile, when I heard what I imagined to be the distant rumbling of a violent tornado, on which I spurred

my steed, with a wish to gallop as fast as possible to the place of shelter; but it would not do, the animal knew better than I what was forthcoming, and, instead of going faster, so nearly stopped, that I remarked he placed one foot after another on the ground with as much precaution as if walking on a smooth sheet of ice. I thought he had suddenly foundered, and, speaking to him, was on the point of dismounting and leading him, when he all of a sudden fell a groaning piteously, hung his head, spread out his fore legs, as if to save himself from falling, and stood stock still, continuing to groan. I thought my horse was about to die, and would have sprung from his back had a minute more elapsed; but at that instant all the shrubs and trees began to move from their very roots, the ground rose and fell in successive furrows, like the ruffled waters of a lake, and I became bewildered in my ideas, as I too plainly discovered that all this awful commotion in nature was the result of an earthquake.

"I had never witnessed anything of the kind before, although, like every other person, I knew of earthquakes by description. But what is description compared with the reality? Who can tell of the sensations which I experienced when I found myself rocking as it were on my horse, and with him moved to and fro like a child in a cradle, with the most imminent danger around, and expecting the ground

every moment to open, and present to my eye such an abyss as might engulf myself and all around me? The fearful convulsion, however, lasted only a few minutes, and the heavens again brightened as quickly as they had become obscured; my horse brought his feet to their natural position, raised his head, and galloped off as if loose and frolicking without a rider.

"I was not, however, without great apprehension respecting my family, from which I was yet many miles distant, fearful that where they were the shock might have caused greater havoc than I had witnessed. I gave the bridle to my steed, and was glad to see him appear as anxious to get home as myself. The pace at which he galloped accomplished this sooner than I had expected, and I found, with much pleasure, that hardly any greater harm had taken place than the apprehension excited for my own safety.

"Shock succeeded shock almost every day and night for several weeks, diminishing, however, so gradually as to dwindle away into mere vibrations of the earth. Strange to say, I for one became so accustomed to the feeling as rather to enjoy the fears manifested by others. I never can forget the effects of one of the slighter shocks which took place when I was at a friend's house, where I had gone to enjoy the merriment that, in our western country, attends a wedding. The ceremony being performed, supper over, and the

fiddles tuned, dancing became the order of the moment. This was merrily followed up to a late hour, when the party retired to rest. We were in what is called, with great propriety, a *log-house*, one of large dimensions, and solidly constructed. The owner was a physician, and in one corner were not only his lancets, tourniquets, amputating knives, and other sanguinary apparatus, but all the drugs which he employed for the relief of his patients, arranged in jars and phials of different sizes. These had some days before made a narrow escape from destruction, but had been fortunately preserved by closing the doors of the cases in which they were contained.

"As I have said, we had all retired to rest, some to dream of sighs and smiles, and others to sink into oblivion. Morning was fast approaching, when the rumbling noise that precedes the earthquake began so loudly as to awaken and alarm the whole party, and drive them out of bed in the greatest consternation. The scene which ensued it is impossible for me to describe, and it would require the humorous pencil of Cruikshank to do justice to it. Fear knows no restraint. Every person, old and young, filled with alarm at the creaking of the log-house, and apprehending instant destruction, rushed wildly out to the grass enclosure fronting the building. The full moon was slowly descending from her throne, covered at times by clouds that rolled heavily along, as if to conceal from her view the scenes of terror

which prevailed on the earth below. On the grass-plat we all met, in such condition as rendered it next to impossible to discriminate any of the party, all huddled together in a state of almost perfect nudity. The earth waved like a field of corn before the breeze; the birds left their perches, and flew about, not knowing whither; and the doctor, recollecting the danger of his gallipots, ran to his shop-room to prevent their dancing off the shelves to the floor. Never for a moment did he think of closing the doors, but, spreading his arms, jumped about the front of the cases, pushing back here and there the falling jars; with so little success, however, that before the shock was over, he had lost nearly all he possessed.

"The shock at length ceased, and the frightened females, now sensible of their dishabille, fled to their several apartments. The earthquakes produced more serious consequences in other places. Near New Madrid, and for some distance on the Mississippi, the earth was rent asunder in several places, one or two islands sunk for ever, and the inhabitants fled in dismay towards the eastern shores."

Familiar with dangers and vicissitudes of every kind, it has been not unjustly remarked of him, that he seemed to bear a charmed life. He was threatened with danger of a different kind, at the hand of the red man, during his western wanderings. This was when, returning from the upper Mississippi, he was forced to cross one of the wide prairies of that region.

We must let him relate it in part. Toward the dusk of the evening, wearied with an interminable jaunt over the prairie, he approached a light that feebly shone from the window of a log-hut. He reached the spot, and presenting himself at the door, asked a tall figure of a woman whether he might take shelter under her roof. Her voice was gruff, and her dress carelessly thrown about her person. She answered his question in the affirmative, when he walked in, took a wooden stool, and quietly seated himself by the fire. A finely-formed young Indian, his head resting between his hands, with his elbows on his knees, was seated in the centre of the cabin. A long bow stood against the wall, while a quantity of arrows and two or three black racoon skins lay at his feet. He moved not: he apparently breathed not. Being addressed in French, he raised his head, pointed to one of his eyes with his finger, and gave a significant glance with the other. His face was covered with blood. It appeared that an hour before, in the act of discharging an arrow at a racoon, the arrow slipped upon the cord, and sprang back with such violence into his right eye, as to destroy it for ever. "Feeling hungry," Mr. Audubon continues his narrative, "I inquired what sort of fare I might expect. Such a thing as a bed was not to be seen, but many large untanned bear and buffalo hides lay piled up in a corner. I drew a fine watch from my vest, and told the woman that it was late, and that I was fatigued.

She had espied my watch, the richness of which seemed to operate upon her feelings with electric quickness. She told me that there was plenty of venison and jerked buffalo meat, and that on removing the ashes I should find a cake. But my watch had struck her fancy, and her curiosity had to be gratified with a sight of it. I took off the gold chain that secured it from around my neck, and presented it to her. She was all ecstasy, spoke of its beauty, asked me its value, put the chain around her brawny neck, saying how happy the possession of such a chain would make her. Thoughtless, and, as I fancied myself in so retired a spot, secure, I paid little attention to her talk or her movements. I helped my dog to a good supper of venison, and was not long in satisfying the demands of my own appetite. The Indian rose from his seat as if in extreme suffering. He pinched me on the side so violently, that the pain nearly brought an exclamation of anger. I looked at him: his eye met mine; but his look was so forbidding that it struck a chill into the more nervous part of my system. He again seated himself, drew a butcher-knife from its greasy scabbard, examined its edge as I would do that of a razor I suspected to be dull, replaced it, and again taking his tomahawk from his back, filled the pipe of it with tobacco, and sent me expressive glances whenever our hostess chanced to have her back toward us. Never till that moment had my senses been awakened to the danger

which I now suspected to be about me. I returned glance for glance with my companion, and rested well assured that, whatever enemies I might have, he was not of the number."

In the meantime he retired to rest upon the skins, when two athletic youths, the sons of the woman, made their entrance. She whispered with them a little while, when they fell to eating and drinking to a state bordering on intoxication. "Judge of my astonishment," he says, "when I saw this incarnate fiend take a large carving-knife, and go to the grindstone to whet its edge! I saw her pour the water on the turning machine, and watched her working away with the dangerous instrument until the sweat covered every part of my body, in spite of my determination to defend myself to the last. Her task finished, she walked to her reeling sons, and said: 'There, that'll soon settle him! Boys, kill yon ——, and then for the watch.' I turned, cocked my gun-locks silently, and lay ready to start up and shoot the first who might attempt my life. Fortunately, two strangers entering at the moment, the purpose of the woman was disclosed, and she and her drunken sons secured."

But before and during this most erratic period of Audubon's long life of vicissitude and exposure, these same solitudes amidst which he wandered knew another shaggy presence even better than his own. The same earthquakes, the same hurricanes, and

the same red foe, had beset the path of Daniel Boone —and he, too, the rough, strong child of nature, was a hunter-naturalist! Though his deeds and aims were not after the manner of those of Audubon, yet were they as grand, and their lives much alike. These remarkable men, one the pioneer of civilization, and the other of art and science in the great American wilderness, did not meet until the career of each had been finally shaped.

We shall trace rapidly the career of Boone up to this period, and see how much resemblance is traceable in the character and experience of these two men.

The great pioneer, Daniel Boone, was born in 1746, and though a native of Maryland, had lived as a hunter in two other states—Virginia and North Carolina — before he was twenty-three. Having reached eighteen, with rifle on shoulder and hunting-knife at belt, he first set off alone for the wilds of Western Virginia. He left his parents behind, since he had found that they were not to be reconciled to the wild, roving, solitary life to which he had been so incurably addicted from the time he was strong enough to handle his little rifle. Since then the woods had been his home, and the father's house his camp—though less and less frequently, as the years advanced, did it amount even to so much of a tie.

It was not because the young Daniel was of either an ungentle or unloving nature that this alienation

and desertion occurred—the reverse is true. We see in him one of those hardy, daring, and active minds, possessed of energies which must find some outlet, and which, under other circumstances, might have exercised great influence, either for good or evil, on his native country.

His family was humble, and he had no educated purpose but what he had learned from the deep breathings of nature. What this purpose was, he never stopped to think—he only felt yearnings, ungovernably strong, for roving unrestrained as the old Red Indian in his native forests. All that he knew definitely concerning himself was, that he always had been a hunter, and always should be a hunter; and as for what might happen farther, he gave no other thought than for the day or the hour.

He might have been civilized into a *gentleman* of Chestnut or Broadway; but that would have spoiled a *man*—the father of a state.

You could not have tamed such a man as Daniel Boone into the mere conventional slave of social custom, while there was "elbow room," as he was wont to term it, in the world. Under the restraint of perhaps even the freest institutions, he would have been a terrible agent of revolution and overthrow.

Indeed, one great cause of the solidity of the American government at present is undoubtedly to be found in the fact, that their immense territories have as yet formed an outlet for such fierce unbending

spirits, in the better work of pioneering, who would otherwise have sought it in the more dangerous one of *emeutes*, as in hampered France. Society had always better let such men go, if they want to go, and can find for themselves such a safe outlet, for it is nearly as sure in that event to hear of them again for ultimate good, as it is certain, if they are restrained, to feel them for immediate evil.

Young Boone passed through Virginia until he reached the wooded glens, and lofty cliffs of the Alleghany Mountains. Here at last it was lonely and wild enough even for him. Parts of this region were singularly picturesque and lovely, as they indeed still are. The fine open woods, sodded with a rich and nutritious grass, afforded at that time the most abundant pasturage for great herds of wild deer, while now these lovely slopes are covered with large grazing farms, sustaining some of the finest cattle in the world.

The young adventurer soon built a little hut in a ravine on the side of a mountain, about twenty miles beyond what he then supposed to be the outermost boundary of settlement. He then quietly proceeded to explore the region round about—pursuing industriously, in the meanwhile, his chosen vocation of hunter. This was at that time a far more honourable and lucrative employment than now. Very many devoted themselves to it as a means of earning an honest livelihood, and the skins and flesh of the

animals slain by them formed an important branch of traffic to the whole country.

Young Boone went to the nearest trading post now and then, laden with skins and meat, to exchange them for powder, lead, and other necessaries, returning as speedily as possible, for the very atmosphere of such crowded haunts was oppressive to him, and the voices of common traffic sounded harsh to ears accustomed only to those of nature.

His lonely explorations were first directed towards the summits of the great chain. He would make excursions of weeks together along the wildest and most inaccessible sides of the mountains—penetrating their deepest fastnesses, and camping wherever the game or other objects of interest attracted him for a time; then he would set out again to explore some newer and yet more difficult region within reach of his solitary cabin.

Thus the whole year was spent in scaling the eastern side of those mountains, the descent upon the western slope of which was to open to him a field of renown.

We next hear of him on the frontier of North Carolina. Here he lived for upwards of a year in the most entire seclusion, never being seen except when he came in to the nearest settlement for powder and lead, seemingly still more shy than before. But yet his unusual energy as a hunter, his skill in woodcraft, and his cool, reckless presence of mind under

all circumstances of danger, soon attracted the admiration of the Border men, and, in spite of his shrinking from all intercourse with his fellows that could be avoided, he found himself at twenty-one literally dragged into the position of a leader.

The frontier of North Carolina was at that time a good deal harassed by Indians, and still more by gangs of white ruffians and marauders, who assumed the guise of Indians to perpetrate their most infamous outrages. From his knowledge of woodcraft he was soon enabled to put an end to such dangerous combinations. This gained him, in a still greater degree, the admiration of the borderers, and he was already regarded as a person of importance, and great confidence reposed in him, though so young a man.

Little was known at this time of the vast country beyond the Alleghanies to the west, and especially of what was then the wild and remote land of Kan-tuck-Kee, as it was termed, from its principal river, by the Indians.

It is true, that so early as 1543, the Spaniards who penetrated the northern country under the chivalrous and unfortunate De Soto, discovered Kentucky while descending the Mississippi. On the Ohio and Mississippi sides it had also frequently been touched by the French Canadians, and by Jesuit missionaries; but it seems that a Colonel Wood, in 1654, was the first American who penetrated it so far as the Mississippi, through the interior.

In 1670, Captain Bolt, visited it from Virginia, and the famous Jesuit, Father Hennepin, visited it in 1680. He was followed by Captain Tonti, three years afterwards, who descended the Mississippi for the first time to its mouth, along with the famous Laselle. By the year 1739, the French Canadian traders had a regular trail through Kentucky by the Big Bone Lick. In 1750, Dr. Thomas Walker crossed the Alleghanies and proceeded to the Cumberland and Kentucky Rivers; then James M'Bride, in 1754, descended to the mouth of the Kentucky River, and left his name there carved upon a beech-tree. But it was not until 1767 that the country could be said to have been really explored.

In this year a bold and enterprising man, John Finley, with a small party of restless wanderers like himself, did penetrate to the very heart of the land, and returning to North Carolina with the story of this new Eden, fired the spirit of adventure wherever he went.

By this time, young Boone had married the daughter of a hardy borderer. In 1769 he left his little family, and with this same John Finley for a guide, and accompanied by a small party in addition, he set off for the new Dorado. His restless spirit yearned for solitudes more vast and wild than any he had yet known. It was only in the excitement of constant action and novelty that he could live.

From this time the history of the young hunter is

well known. Little more than one month, from the first of May to the seventh of June 1769, the party of Boone, consisting of five men beside himself, arrived on what was then called Red River, after having crossed the mountains and penetrated on foot, fully five hundred miles, through the untracked wilderness. Here they formed a camp near where Finley had camped when trapping and trading with the Indians on his previous expedition.

They remained in this locality for some time to recruit, and each day the young Boone wandered farther from the camp towards the west. He made an expedition of several days at last, and having found a much more convenient location, returned, broke up his camp, and moved on to this place.

From this camp he made even wider excursions than before, and it was upon one of these, when alone, he came out upon a mountain steppe, and saw stretched beneath him, as far as eye could reach, the new region of Kentucky. Miles and miles away the land extended in flowery undulating plains; here and there stretched dark lines of heavy forest, above which the morning mist was lifting slowly on the summer breeze.

The young hunter was delighted with his new discovery. He lingered until the night gathered, and then returned with a proud elastic step to the camp. He felt now, for the first time, a fulness of content. Here was a space before him apparently

illimitable, and all nature, nothing but nature! For the dangers he cared nothing—he was already fully prepared for them; and in the fulness of his joy, only looked forward to that vast unbroken quiet of the ancient wilds, that had so absorbed his life in their own stillness.

The camp was broken up next morning, and young Boone with his companions pushed on with great alertness to penetrate the new Eden, and explore its treasures. But poor Boone, who, in the eagerness of his new enthusiasm, pushed on ahead of the rest of the party, in company with his favourite friend and companion, Stewart, was suddenly surrounded by a large party of Indians, and they were both made prisoners as they carelessly ascended a steep hill. They were plundered, stripped, and bound, for the Shawanees who then held that portion of Kentucky were remarkable for their want of ceremony in such cases.

The tact of the borderers now showed itself: Boone and his companion feigned content with such well-dissembled resignation, that the savages were entirely deceived, and gave them liberties which finally resulted in the desired opportunity of escape, of which they availed themselves. They found their camp broken up and plundered, and, to their great dismay, the rest of the party having become frightened by the appearance of the Indians, had returned to North Carolina. This was a great disappointment

to Boone; but his nature was far too resolute to be deterred from the prosecution of his fixed purpose of exploring this whole region, and for this he fortunately received timely aid; for soon after, his brother, Squire Boone, joined them with a small supply of necessaries, of which powder and shot were the most important.

John Stewart, however, was doomed to be the first that should fall in the savage and unnatural struggle which was about to begin between the red and white men. As yet only incidental traders, the Jesuit missionaries, the Canadian French, and a few other chance explorers, had penetrated here and there on the different sides of this lovely land, and had been met with that sort of surly endurance which generally characterizes the first intercourse of the savage with the civilized trader or explorer. As yet no blood of the white man had been shed in Kentucky.

As Boone, his brother, and Stewart were traversing the forest this autumn, they were suddenly fired upon by a large party of Indians from a cane-brake, and Stewart fell, mortally wounded! Resistance was useless. The brothers fled from the overwhelming force, and the scalping-knife which was drawn around poor Stewart's head, may be said to have originated one of the most obstinate and bloody wars that ever occurred between the two races.

Heretofore the most powerful aboriginal tribes of the north and the south had made Kentucky the

common battle-ground. Taking the bloody wars between the Talegans and the Lenaps, with the branch of the famous tribe of Natches in West Kentucky, and with the Sciotos in East Kentucky, the later wars after the breaking up of the great Lenap confederacy, between the Senekas, the Mohawks, the powerful tribes of Menguys, Wyandots, &c., down to the time of the great Shawanee confederacy, this beautiful land had been the scene of all the darkest struggles, till it came to be called the "dark and bloody ground!" Considering the struggle between the Otawas and the Shawanees for supremacy, in which the former conquered, and uniting that with those which had preceded, and with the still more deadly and ferocious contest which was precipitated by the death of Stewart, I think Kentucky is well entitled to the name.

The two Boones were the only white men now left in this vast expanse of wilderness. They were cool and resolute persons; but it seems a tremendous thing to be thus alone, with the momentary prospect of collision with a foe who had just pronounced war to the knife, in the slaughter of Stewart; yet to make this still more remarkable, the brother returned for supplies, and with the purpose of bringing out all that was necessary in the way of implements, for these two hardy pioneers had already resolved on opening a settlement.

In the meantime, Daniel was left sole tenant of

the wilderness—this single young man, with his rifle on shoulder, presuming to hold, "by right of possession," this great demesne against savage foes unnumbered.

His brother returned during the year, and met him at the camp where they had parted. The brave brothers now explored the country more thoroughly, and to greater distances than before, as the younger had then brought in what was far more precious than silver and gold—powder and shot! At the close of the year 1771, they returned for their families, having determined to remove to Kentucky. The renown of the young hunter and his discovery had now reached the settlements, and on the way back he was joined by forty stout hunters in Powell's Valley.

Thus augmented, they reached the interior, when the party was attacked by a large force of Indians, and six of their number killed. Their cattle were scattered, and indeed the whole party disorganized by this incident, and in spite of Boone's exhortations, they persisted in returning upon their trail, and retreated to a settlement on the Clinch River.

Boone was indignant, and buried himself in the depths of the forest, leaving his family in charge of the new settlement, and there remained alone, a hunter, for four years, though revisiting his family occasionally.

He had now become generally known as *the man* of the frontiers, and his reputation had extended

beyond the companions of his frontier adventures. The energetic Governor Spottswood, of the state of Virginia, employed him in some surveys of importance, and from that period he was considered the leading spirit of that part of the state territory.

In 1775, after numerous and important services to the government and the emigrants, who had begun to flock into the country in small parties from all sections, he arrived at a salt spring, or lick, with a scattered fragment of his party, which had been much cut up by the Indians, and commenced building a fort on the site of what is now termed Boonesborough. They were much annoyed by the Indians during this time, and one man was killed by them; but they suffered most from want of provisions. The indomitable courage of Boone overcame everything; he finished his fort, and soon after removed his wife and daughter to the stronghold; and now these two women stood alone by his side, the first who had crossed the mountains yet—the first white women who had yet stood upon the soil of Kentucky!

I cannot follow up with minuteness the further details of the life of this remarkable man. His story is the history of the birth of states in the back woods of America. So soon as Kentucky had grown, mainly under his fostering, to be able to take care of herself, and the smoke of his neighbour's cabin could be seen on the distant hills, the restless pioneer shouldered his rifle and pushed forward to find more

room in the yet deeper and unviolated solitudes of Missouri.

But let us turn to Audubon's first meeting with him, as related by himself in his sketch of the progress of early settlement, and of the wild sports of Kentucky. He says:—

"Kentucky was formerly attached to Virginia, but in those days the Indians looked upon that portion of the western wilds as their own, and abandoned the district only when forced to do so, moving with disconsolate hearts farther into the recesses of the unexplored forests. Doubtless the richness of its soil, and the abundance of its borders, situated as they are along one of the most beautiful rivers in the world, contributed as much to attract the old Virginians, as the desire so generally experienced in America, of spreading over the uncultivated tracts, and bringing into cultivation lands that have for unknown ages teemed with the wild luxuriance of untamed nature. The conquest of Kentucky was not performed without many difficulties. The warfare that long existed between the intruders and the Redskins was sanguinary and protracted; but the former at length made good their footing, and the latter drew off their shattered bands, dismayed by the mental superiority and indomitable courage of the white men.

"This region was probably discovered* by a daring

* We have given the true account of the "Discovery of Kentucky" in the preceding sketch of Boone.

hunter, the renowned Daniel Boone. The richness of its soil, its magnificent forests, its numberless navigable streams, its salt springs and licks, its saltpetre caves, its coal strata, and the vast herds of buffaloes and deer that browsed on its hills and amidst its charming valleys, afforded ample inducements to the new settlers, who pushed forward with a spirit far above that of the most undaunted tribes that for ages had been the sole possessors of the soil.

"The Virginians thronged towards the Ohio. An axe, a couple of horses, and a heavy rifle, with store of ammunition, were all that were considered necessary for the equipment of the man, who, with his family, removed to the new state, assured that, in that land of exuberant fertility, he could not fail to provide amply for all his wants. To have witnessed the industry and perseverance of these emigrants, must at once have proved the vigour of their minds. Regardless of the fatigue attending every movement which they made, they pushed through an unexplored region of dark and tangled forests, guiding themselves by the sun alone, and reposing at night on the bare ground. Numberless streams they had to cross on rafts, with their wives and children, their cattle and their luggage, often drifting to considerable distances before they could effect a landing on the opposite shores. Their cattle would often stray amid the rich pasturage, and occasion a delay of several days. To these troubles add the constantly

impending danger of being murdered while asleep in their encampments, by the prowling and ruthless Indians; while they had before them a distance of hundreds of miles to be traversed, before they could reach certain places of rendezvous called *stations*. To encounter difficulties like these must have required energies of no ordinary kind; and the reward which these veteran settlers enjoyed was doubtless well merited.

"Some removed from the Atlantic shores to those of the Ohio, in more comfort and security. They had their waggons, their negroes, and their families. Their way was cut through the woods by their own axemen the day before their advance, and when night overtook them, the hunters attached to the party came to the place pitched upon for encamping, loaded with the dainties of which the forest yielded an abundant supply, the blazing light of a huge fire guiding their steps as they approached, and the sounds of merriment that saluted their ears assuring them that all was well. The flesh of the buffalo, the bear, and the deer, soon hung in large and delicious steaks in front of the embers; the cakes, already prepared, were deposited in their proper places, and under the rich drippings of the juicy roasts, were quickly baked. The waggons contained the bedding, and whilst the horses which had drawn them were turned loose to feed on the luxuriant undergrowth of the woods, some perhaps hoppled, but the

greater number, merely with a light bell hung to their neck, to guide their owners in the morning to the spot where they might have rambled, the party were enjoying themselves after the fatigues of the day.

"In anticipation all is pleasure; and these migrating bands feasted in joyous sociality, unapprehensive of any greater difficulties than those to be encountered in forcing their way through the pathless woods to the land of abundance; and although it took months to accomplish the journey, and a skirmish now and then took place between them and the Indians, who sometimes crept unperceived into their very camp, still did the Virginians cheerfully proceed towards the western horizon, until the various groups all reached the Ohio, when, struck with the beauty of that magnificent stream, they at once commenced the task of clearing land, for the purpose of establishing a permanent residence.

"Others, perhaps encumbered with too much luggage, preferred descending the stream. They prepared arks pierced with port-holes, and glided on the gentle current, more annoyed, however, than those who marched by land, by the attacks of the Indians, who watched their motions. Many travellers have described these boats, formerly called arks, but now named flat-boats. But have they told you, kind reader, that in those times a boat thirty or forty feet in length, by ten or twelve in breadth, was considered

a stupendous fabric; that this boat contained men, women, and children, huddled together, with horses, cattle, hogs, and poultry for their companions, while the remaining portion was crammed with vegetables and packages of seeds? The roof or deck of the boat was not unlike a farm-yard, being covered with hay, ploughs, carts, waggons, and various agricultural implements, together with numerous others, among which the spinning-wheels of the matrons were conspicuous. Even the sides of the floating mass were loaded with the wheels of the different vehicles, which themselves lay on the roof. Have they told you that these boats contained the little all of each family of venturous emigrants, who, fearful of being discovered by the Indians under night, moved in darkness, groping their way from one part to another of these floating habitations, denying themselves the comfort of fire or light, lest the foe that watched them from the shore should rush upon them and destroy them? Have they told you that this boat was used, after the tedious voyage was ended, as the first dwelling of these new settlers? No, such things have not been related to you before. The travellers who have visited our country have had other objects in view.

"I shall not describe the many massacres which took place among the different parties of white and red men, as the former moved down the Ohio; because I have never been very fond of battles, and

indeed have always wished that the world were more peaceably inclined than it is; and shall merely add, that, in one way or other, Kentucky was wrested from the original owners of the soil. Let us, therefore, turn our attention to the sports still enjoyed in that now happy portion of the United States.

"We have individuals in Kentucky that even there are considered wonderful adepts in the management of the rifle. To drive a nail is a common feat, not more thought of by the Kentuckians than to cut off a wild turkey's head at a distance of a hundred yards. Others will bark off squirrels, one after another, until satisfied with the number procured. Some, less intent on destroying game, may be seen under night snuffing a candle at the distance of fifty yards, off-hand, without extinguishing it.

"Having resided some years in Kentucky, and having more than once been witness of rifle sport, I shall present you with the results of my observation, leaving you to judge how far rifle-shooting is understood in that state.

"Several individuals who conceive themselves expert in the management of the gun, are often seen to meet for the purpose of displaying their skill, and, betting a trifling sum, put up a target, in the centre of which a common-sized nail is hammered for about two-thirds of its length. The marksmen make choice of what they consider a proper distance, which may be forty paces. Each man cleans the interior of his

tube, which is called wiping it, places a ball in the palm of his hand, pouring as much powder from his horn upon it as will cover it. This quantity is supposed to be sufficient for any distance within a hundred yards. A shot which comes very close to the nail is considered as that of an indifferent marksman; the bending of the nail is, of course, somewhat better; but nothing less than hitting it right on the head is satisfactory. Well, kind reader, one out of three shots generally hits the nail, and should the shooters amount to half a dozen, two nails are frequently needed before each can have a shot. Those who drive the nail have a further trial amongst themselves, and the two best shots out of these generally settle the affair, when all the sportsmen adjourn to some house, and spend an hour or two in friendly intercourse, appointing, before they part, a day for another trial. This is technically termed Driving the Nail.

"Barking off squirrels is delightful sport, and, in my opinion, requires a greater degree of accuracy than any other. I first witnessed this manner of procuring squirrels whilst near the town of Frankfort. The performer was the celebrated Daniel Boone. We walked out together, and followed the rocky margins of the Kentucky River, until we reached a piece of flat land thickly covered with black walnuts, oaks, and hickories. As the general mast was a good one that year, squirrels were seen gambolling on every tree around us. My companion,

a stout, hale, and athletic man, dressed in a homespun hunting-shirt, bare-legged and moccasined, carried a long and heavy rifle, which, as he was loading it, he said had proved efficient in all his former undertakings, and which he hoped would not fail on this occasion, as he felt proud to show me his skill. The gun was wiped, the powder measured, the ball patched with six-hundred-thread linen, and the charge sent home with a hickory rod. We moved not a step from the place, for the squirrels were so numerous that it was unnecessary to go after them. Boone pointed to one of these animals which had observed us, and was crouched on a branch about fifty paces distant, and bade me mark well the spot where the ball should hit. He raised his piece gradually, until the bead (that being the name given by the Kentuckians to the sight) of the barrel was brought to a line with the spot which he intended to hit. The whip-like report resounded through the woods and along the hills in repeated echoes. Judge of my surprise, when I perceived that the ball had hit the piece of the bark immediately beneath the squirrel, and shivered it into splinters, the concussion produced by which had killed the animal, and sent it whirling through the air, as if it had been blown up by the explosion of a powder magazine. Boone kept up his firing, and, before many hours had elapsed, we had procured as many squirrels as we wished; for you must know, kind reader, that to load a rifle

requires only a moment, and that if it is wiped once after each shot, it will do duty for hours. Since that first interview with our veteran Boone, I have seen many other individuals perform the same feat."

On another occasion Audubon remarks:—"Colonel Boone happened to spend a night with me under the same roof, more than twenty years ago. We had returned from a shooting excursion, in the course of which his extraordinary skill in the management of the rifle had been fully displayed. On retiring to the room appropriated to that remarkable individual and myself for the night, I felt anxious to know more of his exploits and adventures than I did, and accordingly took the liberty of proposing numerous questions to him. The stature and general appearance of this wanderer of the western forests approached the gigantic. His chest was broad and prominent; his muscular powers displayed themselves in every limb; his countenance gave indication of his great courage, enterprise, and perseverance; and when he spoke, the very motion of his lips brought the impression that whatever he uttered could not be otherwise than strictly true. I undressed, whilst he merely took off his hunting-shirt, and arranged a few folds of blankets on the floor, choosing rather to lie there, as he observed, than on the softest bed. When we had both disposed of ourselves, each after his own fashion, he related to me the following account of his powers of memory, which I lay before the reader, in

his own words, hoping that the simplicity of his style may prove interesting:—

"I was once," said he, "on a hunting expedition on the banks of the Green River, when the lower parts of this state (Kentucky) were still in the hands of nature, and none but the sons of the soil were looked upon as its lawful proprietors. We Virginians had for some time been waging a war of intrusion upon them, and I, amongst the rest, rambled through the woods in pursuit of their race, as I now would follow the tracks of any ravenous animal. The Indians outwitted me one dark night, and I was as unexpectedly as suddenly made a prisoner by them. The trick had been managed with great skill; for no sooner had I extinguished the fire of my camp, and laid me down to rest, in full security, as I thought, than I felt myself seized by an indistinguishable number of hands, and was immediately pinioned, as if about to be led to the scaffold for execution. To have attempted to be refractory, would have proved useless and dangerous to my life; and I suffered myself to be removed from my camp to theirs, a few miles distant, without uttering even a word of complaint. You are aware, I dare say, that to act in this manner was the best policy, as you understand that, by so doing, I proved to the Indians at once that I was born and bred as fearless of death as any of themselves.

"When we reached the camp, great rejoicings

were exhibited. Two squaws and a few papooses appeared particularly delighted at the sight of me, and I was assured, by very unequivocal gestures and words, that, on the morrow, the mortal enemy of the Redskins would cease to live. I never opened my lips, but was busy contriving some scheme which might enable me to give the rascals the slip before dawn. The women immediately fell a searching about my hunting-shirt for whatever they might think valuable, and, fortunately for me, soon found my flask filled with *monongahela* (that is, reader, strong whisky). A terrific grin was exhibited on their murderous countenances, while my heart throbbed with joy at the anticipation of their intoxication. The crew immediately began to beat their bellies and sing, as they passed the bottle from mouth to mouth. How often did I wish the flask ten times its size, and filled with aquafortis! I observed that the squaws drank more freely than the warriors, and again my spirits were about to be depressed, when the report of a gun was heard at a distance. The Indians all jumped on their feet. The singing and drinking were both brought to a stand, and I saw, with inexpressible joy, the men walk off to some distance and talk to the squaws. I knew that they were consulting about me, and I foresaw that, in a few moments, the warriors would go to discover the cause of the gun having been fired so near their camp. I expected that the squaws

would be left to guard me. Well, sir, it was just so. They returned; the men took up their guns, and walked away. The squaws sat down again, and in less than five minutes had my bottle up to their dirty mouths, gurgling down their throats the remains of the whisky.

"With what pleasure did I see them becoming more and more drunk, until the liquor took such hold on them that it was quite impossible for these women to be of any service. They tumbled down, rolled about, and began to snore; when I, having no other chance of freeing myself from the cords that fastened me, rolled over and over towards the fire, and after a short time, burned them asunder. I rose on my feet, stretched my stiffened sinews, snatched up my rifle, and, for once in my life, spared that of Indians. I now recollect how desirous I once or twice felt to lay open the skulls of the wretches with my tomahawk; but when I again thought upon killing beings unprepared and unable to defend themselves, it looked like murder without need, and I gave up the idea.

"But, sir, I felt determined to mark the spot, and walking to a thrifty ash sapling, I cut out of it three large chips, and ran off. I soon reached the river, soon crossed it, and threw myself deep into the canebrakes, imitating the tracks of an Indian with my feet, so that no chance might be left for those from whom I had escaped to overtake me.

"It is now nearly twenty years since this happened, and more than five since I left the whites' settlements, which I might probably never have visited again, had I not been called on as a witness in a law-suit that was pending in Kentucky, and which I really believe would never have been settled, had I not come forward and established the beginning of a certain boundary line. This is the story, sir:—

"Mr. Lippin moved from Old Virginia into Kentucky, and having a large tract granted to him in the new state, laid claim to a certain parcel of land adjoining Green River, and as chance would have it, took for one of his corners the very ash-tree on which I had made my mark, and finished his survey of some thousands of acres, beginning, as it is expressed in the deed, 'at an ash marked by three distinct notches of the tomahawk of a white man.'

"The tree had grown much, and the bark had covered the marks; but, somehow or other, Mr. Lippin heard from some one all that I have already said to you, and thinking that I might remember the spot alluded to in the deed, but which was no longer discoverable, wrote for me to come and try at least to find the place or the tree. His letter mentioned that all my expenses should be paid, and not much objecting to go once more back to Kentucky, I started and met Mr. Lippin. After some conversation, the affair with the Indians came to my recollec-

tion. I considered for a while, and began to think that after all I could find the very spot, as well as the tree, if it was yet standing.

"Mr. Lippin and I mounted our horses, and off we went to the Green River Bottoms. After some difficulties, for you must be aware, sir, that great changes have taken place in those woods, I found at last the spot where I had crossed the river, and waiting for the moon to rise, made for the course in which I thought the ash-tree grew. On approaching the place, I felt as if the Indians were there still, and as if I was still a prisoner among them. Mr. Lippin and I camped near what I conceived the spot, and waited until the return of day.

"At the rising of the sun I was on foot, and after a good deal of musing, thought that an ash-tree then in sight must be the very one on which I had made my mark. I felt as if there could be no doubt of it, and mentioned my thought to Mr. Lippin. 'Well, Colonel Boone,' said he, 'if you think so, I hope it may prove true, but we must have some witnesses; do you stay here about, and I will go and bring some of the settlers whom I know.' I agreed. Mr. Lippin trotted off, and I, to pass the time, rambled about to see if a deer was still living in the land. But ah! sir, what a wonderful difference thirty years makes in the country! Why, at the time when I was caught by the Indians, you would not have walked out in any direction for more than a mile without shooting a buck

or a bear. There were then thousands of buffaloes on the hills in Kentucky; the land looked as if it never would become poor; and to hunt in those days was a pleasure indeed. But when I was left to myself on the banks of Green River, I dare say for the last time in my life, a few *signs* only of deer were to be seen, and as to a deer itself, I saw none.

"Mr. Lippin returned, accompanied by three companions. They looked upon me as if I had been Washington himself, and walked to the ash-tree, which I now called my own, as if in quest of a long-lost treasure. I took an axe from one of them, and cut a few chips off the bark. Still no signs were to be seen. So I cut again until I thought it was time to be cautious, and I scraped and worked away with my butcher-knife, until I *did* come to where my tomahawk had left an impression in the wood. We now went regularly to work, and scraped at the tree with care, until three hacks, as plain as any three notches ever were, could be seen. Mr. Lippin and the others were astonished, and, I must allow, I was as much surprised as pleased myself. I made affidavit of this remarkable occurrence in presence of these gentlemen. Mr. Lippin gained his cause. I left Green River for ever, and came to where we now are; and, sir, I wish you a good night."

There are a thousand such characteristic anecdotes of Daniel Boone that might be given, but none of them would be so interesting in themselves or possess

such attraction as this, coming from the lips of such a narrator—for Boone was not more remarkable for the development of the curious instincts of wood-craft than Audubon himself, who of all men was best qualified to appreciate such in another. Not long after his removal to Missouri, Boone died, in 1818, and what will probably not surprise the reader, died poor! With all the opportunities his life had afforded him from the beginning, of amassing enormous wealth, by dealing in lands, the settlement of which he pioneered, he only retained to the last what was his original inheritance—his rifle!

Audubon, too, is since dead. But let us, before we pass to other themes, linger to look upon him once more, at the moment and in the scene of what he considered the greatest triumph of his long life—his discovery of the Bird of Washington. He says:—

"It was in the month of February 1814, that I obtained the first sight of this noble bird, and never shall I forget the delight which it gave me. Not even Herschel, when he discovered the planet which bears his name, could have experienced more rapturous feelings. We were on a trading voyage, ascending the Upper Mississippi. The keen wintry blasts whistled around us, and the cold from which I suffered had in a great degree extinguished the deep interest which at other seasons this magnificent river has been wont to awake in me. I lay stretched beside our patroon. The safety of the cargo was forgotten, and

the only thing that called my attention was the multitude of ducks, of different species, accompanied by vast flocks of swans, which from time to time passed us. My patroon, a Canadian, had been engaged many years in the fur trade. He was a man of much intelligence, and perceiving that these birds had engaged my curiosity, seemed anxious to find some new object to divert me. An eagle flew over us. 'How fortunate!' he exclaimed; 'this is what I could have wished. Look, sir! the great eagle, and the only one I have seen since I left the lakes.' I was instantly on my feet, and having observed it attentively, concluded, as I lost it in the distance, that it was a species quite new to me. My patroon assured me that such birds were indeed rare; that they sometimes followed the hunters, to feed on the entrails of animals which they had killed, when the lakes were frozen over; but that when the lakes were open, they would dive in the daytime after fish, and snatch them up in the manner of the fishing-hawk; and that they roosted generally on the shelves of the rocks, where they built their nests, of which he had discovered several by the quantity of white dung scattered below.

"Convinced that the bird was unknown to naturalists, I felt particularly anxious to learn its habits, and to discover in what particulars it differed from the rest of its genus. My next meeting with this bird was a few years afterwards, whilst engaged in collecting

crayfish on one of those flats which border and divide Green River, in Kentucky, near its junction with the Ohio. The river is there bordered by a range of high cliffs, which for some distance follow its windings. I observed on the rocks, which at that place are nearly perpendicular, a quantity of white ordure, which I attributed to owls that might have resorted thither. I mentioned the circumstance to my companions, when one of them, who lived within a mile and a half of the place, told me it was from the nest of the brown eagle, meaning the white-headed eagle (*Falco leucocephalus*) in its immature state. I assured him this could not be, and remarked that neither the old nor the young birds of that species ever build in such places, but always in trees. Although he could not answer my objection, he stoutly maintained that a brown eagle of some kind, above the usual size, had built there; and added that he had espied the nest some days before, and had seen one of the old birds dive and catch a fish. This he thought strange, having, till then, always observed that both brown eagles and bald eagles procured this kind of food by robbing the fish-hawks. He said that if I felt particularly anxious to know what nest it was, I might soon satisfy myself, as the old birds would come and feed their young with fish, for he had seen them do so before.

"In high expectation, I seated myself about a hundred yards from the foot of the rock. Never did

time pass more slowly. I could not help betraying the most impatient curiosity, for my hopes whispered it was a sea-eagle's nest. Two long hours had elapsed before the old bird made his appearance, which was announced to us by the loud hissings of the two young ones, which crawled to the extremity of the hole to receive a fine fish. I had a perfect view of this noble bird as he held himself to the edging rock, hanging like the barn, bank, or social swallow, his tail spread, and his wings partly so. I trembled lest a word should escape from my companions. The slightest murmur had been treason from them. They entered into my feelings, and, although little interested, gazed with me. In a few minutes the other parent joined her mate, and from the difference in size (the female of rapacious birds being much larger), we knew this to be the mother bird. She also had brought a fish; but, more cautious than her mate, she glanced her quick and piercing eye around, and instantly perceived that her abode had been discovered. She dropped her prey, with a loud shriek communicated the alarm to the male, and hovering with him over our heads, kept up a growling cry, to intimidate us from our suspected design. This watchful solicitude I have ever found peculiar to the female. Must I be understood to speak only of birds?

"The young having concealed themselves, we went and picked up the fish which the mother had let fall.

It was a white perch, weighing about 5½ lbs. The upper part of the head was broken in, and the back torn by the talons of the eagle. We had plainly seen her bearing it in the manner of the fish-hawk.

"This day's sport being at an end, as we journeyed homewards we agreed to return the next morning, with the view of obtaining both the old and young birds; but rainy and tempestuous weather setting in, it became necessary to defer the expedition till the third day following, when, with guns and men all in readiness, we reached the rock. Some posted themselves at the foot, others upon it, but in vain. We passed the entire day, without either seeing or hearing an eagle, the sagacious birds, no doubt, having anticipated an invasion, and removed their young to new quarters.

"I come at last to the day which I had so often and so ardently desired. Two years had gone by since the discovery of the nest, in fruitless excursions; but my wishes were no longer to remain ungratified. In returning from the little village of Henderson to the house of Dr. Rankin, about a mile distant, I saw an eagle rise from a small enclosure not a hundred yards before me, where the doctor had a few days before slaughtered some hogs, and alight upon a low tree branching over the road. I prepared my double-barreled piece, which I constantly carry, and went slowly and cautiously towards him. Quite fearlessly he awaited my approach, looking upon me with un-

daunted eye. I fired, and he fell. Before I reached him he was dead. With what delight did I survey the magnificent bird! Had the finest salmon ever pleased him as he did me?—Never. I ran and presented him to my friend, with a pride which they alone can feel, who, like me, have devoted themselves from their earliest childhood to such pursuits, and who have derived from them their first pleasures. To others I must seem to 'prattle out of fashion.' The doctor, who was an experienced hunter, examined the bird with much satisfaction, and frankly acknowledged he had never before seen or heard of it.

"In the month of January following, I saw a pair of these eagles flying over the Falls of the Ohio, one in pursuit of the other. The next day I saw them again. The female had relaxed her severity, had laid aside her coyness, and to a favourite tree they continually resorted. I pursued them unsuccessfully for several days, when they forsook the place."

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE HUNTERS OF KENTUCKY.

#### THE GRAVE OF THE SILENT HUNTER.

My native town, Hopkinsville, is in one of the southern counties of Kentucky, called Christian, which was for a long time one of the largest counties, if not the largest, in the whole state. This was no special matter of boast, by the way; for although the southern portion, comprising about half the county which bordered upon the Tennessee line, was as rich, level, and lovely a stretch of "barrens" as could anywhere be seen, yet, immediately to the north of the county-seat—Hopkinsville—the whole character of the county changed at once. While five miles to the south was a paradise of flowers, or, when cultivated, covered with crops of Indian corn ten and fifteen feet in height; tobacco, with leaves often three feet by two; and wheat, five to six feet;—the same distance to the north brought you amidst rugged hills of sand or clay, that barely yielded the most meagre subsistence to the poor and simple inhabitants, who necessarily remained hunters. Their rifles supplied them with that provision which the ungrateful earth refused to yield to the plough and the hoe. As you penetrated further in this direction, the

country became wilder and more broken at every turn of the narrow trail, until, even so late as twelve years ago, you came upon a country quite as wild and savagely unaltered as when the Indian war-whoop alone disturbed its echoes. Here your trails cease, and as you push into this formidable-looking wilderness, which reaches to Green River, over forty miles, you shudder at the tremendous solitudes of its abrupt cliffs, that seem to take away your breath when you come suddenly upon the verge of their deep gorges, winding far away, black with the "bottom forests," except where some stream that has leaped from beneath you down the cliff, gleams out from the shadow here and there; or when, in the distance, some huge "Pilot Knob" lifts its bare, conical crown, high into the hazy heavens. The scene here is indeed inexpressibly wild and stern. These Pilot Knobs, of which there are two, are famous in the early annals of Kentucky. They constitute the most peculiar features of this singular scenery, and there are many legends connected with them. Here the Indians lingered longest after being driven from their northern possessions, or hunting grounds; and here the raging hate of the two races spent itself in the last desperate collisions. Here the game lingered too, and must continue to linger for many a year to come; though what was once the sole possession of the fierce Shawanee, is now periodically intruded upon by the sons of the lordly

planters of the tobacco lands to the south, who are accustomed to make up, yearly, camping parties, to hunt in this region for a few weeks towards the close of autumn.

Along the southern border of the rougher part of this wilderness, there are a few cabins of the old race of hunters, who belong to the times of Boone, and still boast that they continue to hold their own, which means, being still "out of sight of the smoke of a neighbour's chimney!" It would, indeed, be rather a difficult feat to see this same smoke, it must be confessed, since the nearest neighbour is probably twelve miles off, and both their huts embosomed in steep crags!

I have never been a lover of, what they term so expressively in the west, a crowd, particularly on hunting excursions. The chief charm of these has consisted in the entire separation from my race, permitted for the time, and the solitude that invites a refreshing communion with the primitive forms of the natural world. Many a time have I forgotten to shoot, and let the stately deer go by unscathed, while I stood breathless, to admire its graceful action, and the harmony of its antlered presence, with the swaying of old boughs and leap of streams.

But I was usually as keen a hunter as ever startled the echoes with the rifle's shrill ring. My companion at this time, some twelve years ago, was, like myself, named Charles, or Charlie M., as he was

everywhere called, from his merry, reckless, jovial character. Now, Charlie was a character, sure enough, and just such an one you will meet with nowhere else in the world but in Kentucky; and even there it is nearly gone by this time. A more gentle and generous spirit never lived, nor did a truer heart beat. He was as merrily reckless as a prodigious flow of physical energies, mirthful instincts, and indomitable courage, could make him. He always took sides with the weak, it mattered not to him what the odds of the oppressor, or how strange both parties might be to him. He carried this feeling to amusing extremes in the defence of domestic animals; and many a scrape he has got into by taking the part of a poor horse or dog that was being cruelly beaten by a drunken master. He would never pass such a scene without stopping it, at all hazards to himself; he would never see a negro beaten, and never struck his own, but resented it as a personal injury to himself if another did. This man was the most passionately devoted to the chase of any one I had ever yet met with. His father had been very wealthy, and, at the time he grew up, at Frankfort, the capital of Kentucky, the chase was the one fashionable and absorbing pursuit of the young men of his class. The greater part of his life was thus spent in the saddle; and a passion cultivated from boyhood is not easily shaken off in manhood, particularly when it is one so fascinating. He kept a

splendid pack of hounds, the genealogy of every one of which he had at his tongue's end; and some fine hunters in his stable; and for years after I knew him—when he moved to the south, near my native town—he spent fully one-third of his time, night and day, in the woods on horseback, following his hounds. He, too, was a genuine lover of nature, and preferred to hunt alone. Charlie was indeed the very impersonation of a class of gay, dashing, reckless, and accomplished sportsmen of the north of Kentucky, which is now nearly extinct. Whether, mounted on his tall and powerful hunter, he went sweeping through the woods at a pace that would have terrified any other sportsman on the open ground, and always close with the chase, cheering his hounds; or, on our long rides to the distant hunting-grounds by night, blowing a chorus to some wild hunting-song in the blasts of his bugle, or to some touching ballad of ancient chivalry, he was still the consistent ideal of the old north Kentucky fox-hunter.

We soon knew each other; and, as there were many points of congeniality between myself and the wild hunter, we became frequent companions, particularly on the long hunts of this region, which I have described.

It was the last of November that we started with hound and horn for the hills, on the grand hunt of the year. A snow-storm had commenced over-night, and none but a true hunter can realize the delight

with which the first snow-storm is welcomed. Then only comes his enjoyment in highest perfection! The game of every kind is not only within his reach, but is in its highest condition. He can himself trace it for miles away through the deep snow, until brought to bay at last, it falls before his unerring aim. He has an exulting consciousness of his independence, even of his dogs, for nothing can escape his practised eye and tireless patience. The most exciting of all hunts are proverbially those in the snow; but in the northern states they become very soon mere butcheries, where the deep snow remains on the ground for three or four months, with a crust over it just strong enough to bear a man on snow shoes, and yet will let in the poor animal at every jump as deep as it can sink. It is like slaughtering sheep in a pen, when hunters attack a deer or moose under such circumstances; but in Kentucky the case is very different. The snow seldom or never falls deeper than two feet, and most frequently does not last a week. All the sport is therefore confined to within the first few days; and the principal, if not only advantage, the hunter gains, consists in the increased facility with which the game is traced, either by himself or by the noses of his hounds. This makes the sport intensely exciting, for you sometimes pursue a single herd or sole animal for twenty miles, before you get a shot; but as you are sure to get a glimpse of them, and

hear their whistling snort of defiance as they bound on again, every half hour or so, you are kept in a constant state of excitement, and beguiled, without heeding, over miles and miles that would otherwise have been weary enough. It is only when the coveted achievement has been really accomplished, and you have thrown your noble quarry across the saddle, that you begin to realize fatigue, as, with aching limbs, you turn your wearied horse through the darkening woods towards the distant camp. On, on we plunge; the miles grow longer, and the noble horse begins to stagger beneath his double load, and then the shuddering apprehension comes, that he may give out, and leave us to trudge the live-long night through the snow to keep from freezing. But my sagacious horse has stopped of his own accord, while, with pricked ears, he listens. Hark! that faint distant sound! He stamps his foot with an impatient neigh, and springs forward. No more staggering now—fatigue is gone. With an eager neigh he breaks into a run, under my not unwilling rein, for I, too, have caught a glimpse of a fire through the wood, and recognise the white face of yonder cliff, with the moon full upon it; and in another minute, with a mad whoop of delight, I burst into the light of the camp-fire, to be welcomed by the combined noise of a dozen hounds, and a hearty cheer from the gallant Charlie!

Now the scene has changed, and by the warm fire

and over the smoking roast of tenderest venison, the feats of the day are recounted with as much eager zest as if there had been no such thing as cold, fatigue, and nervous apprehensions. The terrors have all vanished within the charmed circle of that fire-light, and we throw ourselves upon our blankets to sleep, dreaming lustily of just such scenes to be gone through to-morrow. So sunrise would find us with appetites only sharpened by the sufferings of the day before, and yet more ready to do full justice to the roast or living venison. Such are the strange inconsistencies of the hunter's moods, and such the charms of the vivid shifting excitements of his restless and tumultuous life!

Our sport in the snow was now over; but we were not by any means satisfied, and Charlie proposed that we should strike our camp, and make our way across the ridges to the hut of a famous hunter, known along this border as "Old Jake"—what his other name was he had never heard, though he had been at his hut several times. He said the old fellow would be very glad to see us, and would furnish us with a "hill boy" whom he kept in his employ, to act as a guide and driver for us. We intended now to change our mode of hunting. We were to be placed by the driver at different "stands," as they are called, meaning places at which, from his knowledge of the country, he knew the deer always passed out when roused by the dogs from their feeding-

grounds. After placing us, he was to return along the ridge for a mile or so with the dogs, and then descending into the bottom, with sound of horns, yells of dogs, and other noises, drive the frightened creatures before him to our stands. We found everything at Old Jake's as Charlie expected. We were received with true hunter hospitality by the family, consisting of the old man, his tanned and wrinkled dame, with two stout and comely daughters, who were the very impersonations of buxom good-humour.

We had a merry time of it the first evening, and the next morning, early, were joined by our guide. He was a droll-looking specimen, tall, and lantern-jawed. It was marvellous to see the cadaverous-looking creature making his way over these rugged hills, far in advance of our active horses, while with every long stride his loose limbs actually seemed to be wrapping round each other. He was called Jabe, an abbreviation, as I supposed, for Jabez, and carried a very long specimen of the old-fashioned rifle of our fathers. It was easy enough to see that he was a fine marksman, from the sharp, steady shine of his black eyes beneath the long, coarse Indian-like hair that hung over them; indeed, I half suspected that the fellow was a half-breed, but had no opportunity of ascertaining. We had evidence enough of this afterwards. Placing ourselves with implicit faith under his patronage and guidance, we met with sport to satiety at last within two days.

We had gone out as usual on the third, and in a different direction from any we had yet tried. The spot assigned me for a stand by Jabe was by far the most remarkable I had yet seen. Five miles back, we had, with considerable difficulty, climbed up the steep side of a lofty and wooded ridge, that seemed much higher than any one we had yet seen. We had found the top apparently level; though, as we rode on, I observed the surrounding country to be either sinking beneath the feet of the ridge, or else the ridge was rising rapidly above the country. Suddenly we came to what, I remember, instantly reminded me of my boyish idea of the "jumping-off place!" The thing was so sudden that our horses reared backwards, and snorted with affright. We were on the sheer verge of a precipice three hundred feet in depth, and the heavy forest below us looked almost like lichens clinging to stones, which were in reality considerable bluffs. It seemed as if the ancient basin of some ocean lay at our feet, stretching as far as the eye could reach on either hand and in front. Far away to the right, just under the rim of the horizon, we could distinguish the dark, heavy line of the wood bordering Green River; while to the left it rested on a blue serrated line of lofty knobs. We were lost in wonderment, gazing over this extraordinary scene, when Charlie suddenly shouted, as he turned his head quickly, "Hilloa, there! — you Jabe — where are you making off to, you tallow-

skinned knave?—you haven't shown me my stand yet!"

But Jabe either did not, or pretended not to hear, and only increased the celerity of his gait, as he went crashing through the brush down the steep ridge-side without turning his head. Charlie was highly enraged, and bestowed upon him sundry expletives, which it is hardly necessary to repeat. I laughed heartily at the incident, and Charlie at once forgot his wrath in a loud burst of merriment, when I recalled to his recollection the droll way in which our guide had acted for the last mile. He had been up to that time striding just ahead of our horses, asking us all sorts of unsophisticated questions about the ways of the "settlements," and telling us quaint anecdotes about Old Jake, who was the greatest man in the world, according to his estimation. Indeed, he had been keeping us in one continued roar of laughter at his simplicity, and a certain shrewdness combined, when suddenly a new thought seemed to have struck him. He had paused for an instant, looked around him furtively, and then drawing over towards the left-hand side of the ridge, had from that time commenced bearing down that side further and further, until when we had nearly reached this spot, he pointed here, without a word, and the next we saw of him he was hurrying down the ridge.

"You remember, Charlie, we could get nothing, not one word, out of him, with all your merciless

rallying, after he made that sudden stop! Depend upon it, there is some fun in this, and that fellow has got this bluff-point somehow mixed up in the ridiculous superstitions common to his class!"

After many merry comments upon this text, in the course of which, with our loud talking and laughter, we violated all the accepted rules of "driving," which require, peremptorily, the most profound silence on the part of the stander, as he approaches his stand, we came to the conclusion that as the mischief had no doubt already been done, and the deer turned back by the sound of our voices, we had just as well take it easy until the driver came in. So, seating, or rather stretching ourselves upon some mossy boulders scattered around, we chatted away the next half hour, although an occasional eddy of the wind would bring up to our ears the distant babble of the hounds in the valley, and the long wail of the driver's horn, both showing the game was on foot; yet neither of us rose, so entirely had we become cloyed of this sport! Soon the full chorus of hounds burst upon us, seemingly close at hand; still neither of us rose. Suddenly we heard a heavy crashing through the underbrush, and before we had time to think, an enormous black bear rushed past us.

"Ha! new game!" I exclaimed, as we both sprang to our feet and fired our rifles after the unwieldy brute. It was evidently hit, but kept on with undiminished speed across the ridge. The dogs, with

bristles erect, and savage yells, came pouring after, while we, thus unexpectedly aroused to the wildest excitement, shouted like madmen, as we followed after on foot, loading our guns while we ran. We knew the bear was wounded, and would take to the first large tree it came to. The comb of the ridge was about a quarter of a mile wide here, and the ground a general level. We heard the dogs baying furiously now.

"He's tree'd already!" chuckled Charlie. "Let us approach cautiously."

We feared the bear might resort to its common trick when tree'd by the dogs: seeing the hunters approach, it rolls itself up, and dropping to the ground, makes off again. We, however, managed to get fair shots, and brought it down. It was a very large animal of the species, and we wound a merry blast, both loud and long, in honour of our unexpected triumph. We supposed that the sound of the guns and the recall of the horns would, of course, bring our faithful esquire, Jabe, to us. After listening for some time, and no answer, Charlie gave another louder and longer blast, with all the power of his lungs. After listening a moment we could barely distinguish a feeble "too-oot! toot!" that seemed to come from no great distance, but what the direction might be neither of us could tell; for Jabe, as it undoubtedly was, must surely have been stretched upon the ground in some hiding-place. I laughed heartily.

"Why, Charlie, that fellow is frightened out of his wits by some ghost-story—we must get along without him!"

"More likely the bear has scared him into a fit!" exclaimed Charlie. We accordingly went to work, in despair of any assistance from the redoubtable Jabe, and prepared our meat for transportation homeward. We had reached our horses, and while engaged in dividing the burden between them, who should come crawling cautiously towards us, out of the wood, but our gentleman of the asthmatic horn.

Jabe was soon very coolly examining the bear, while his eyes fairly glistened at the sight of the fat heavy hams.

"He's a whopper!" he exclaimed; "killed just such an old one down in the truck-patch, back of uncle Jake's, about this time last winter. I was out choppin', and he came snuffing at a hog-bone I'd brought for a bite, and didn't seem to mind me; so I stood still, and he came too close at last, and I let him have it across the nose!—one lick turned him up, sir—sure as a gun!"

I now remembered having heard uncle Jake refer to this feat of Jabe—but it had been done incidentally, and in such a matter-of-course sort of a way, that I had not noticed it specially at the time. The simple way in which the young hunter now recalled it, and the enthusiasm which lit his eye the moment he saw our unwonted quarry, convinced me that

Charlie had been entirely mistaken in thinking he had been kept away by any fear of our game, and that there must be some other cause for the evident alarm of a man who had already, and with such coolness, killed a full-grown bear with an axe only. I accordingly let Charlie have his laugh out; for he had no notion of listening to any but his own version of the affair, while I determined to take advantage of the garrulous excitement caused in the mind of Jabe by the sight of this, the most valued of all the game of the country, to draw out from him the real cause of his alarm. So we sat down on the ground to examine the bear more at our leisure, and winking at Charlie, I at last got him to comprehend something of my purpose. We drew him out as to his hunting-feats in general, but more especially with regard to those in this particular neighbourhood. Gradually he seemed to forget himself, and watching the moment, I asked him, suddenly, if he had ever taken a stand here, where he had placed us, himself.

"I!" he exclaimed, with a look of amazement—"I!—no!—I would not take a 'stand' on this Point for all the bears on the Tennessee and Cumberland put together!"

"But why not, Jabe? we've seen nothing very wrong here!"

"O, you're strangers! but didn't he swear before he died, that the first hunter that came near enough that big black oak to see the little headstone of his

grave, that he meant to haunt him to death? Didn't he? I tell you this, I am not the boy that would go within a hundred yards of that big oak on any consideration."

"But," said I, impatiently, "Jabe, who was this person?"

"Why, old Bill Smith, to be sure!—did you never hear of old Bill Smith? Why, uncle Jake know'd him well—he has fought Indians with him many a time; everybody down in these parts know'd him!"

"No doubt, Jabe; but you say he's buried under the big black oak—was he buried there of his own wish?"

"Of course!—they say he chose the place years before he died, and fixed the grave himself. They who buried him say it's a mighty curious sort o' grave. He was one of Boone's men, and so was uncle Jake, and uncle Jake helped three more of 'em to bury him. There aint been a living soul round here since. He lived by himself more than two years, down by the big spring. That's since I can recollect. He never spoke to anybody but our uncle Jake, and we never saw him more than three times a year, when he came in to get the powder and lead uncle Jake had got for him."

"Now, Jabe," said I, in my most wheedling tone, "Jabe, my good fellow, won't you show us the grave?"

"I!—good!—why, man, no!—not for all the money in your town!"

"But, Jabe, you need only go near enough to show us the tree—you will not be violating the command in doing that merely!"

He still continued to shake his head, dubiously, in spite of our united entreaties, and mutter—

"I don't like this here ridge, anyhow—don't think it's safe—wish I hadn't been such a fool as to come this way—forgot till I was most here!"

But Charlie and I, in whom the spirit of mischief on his part, and earnest curiosity on mine, had now been thoroughly roused, determined to give poor Jabe no time for consideration, and plied him on both sides with such eagerness, that after a considerable degree of wavering and hesitation, we at last brought him up to the sticking point by the application of a dollar to his palm. He started, though still with visible trepidation, to lead us to the grave. I could scarcely keep from giving way to my inclination to laugh again, as I watched the various expressions of dread, mingled with the efforts to express a courageous sort of air, which were becoming more and more forlorn as we approached the scene of his apprehensions.

We had not walked more than a few hundred yards, almost immediately along the edge of the cliff, when he stopped, and pointing ahead to a very large black oak tree that stood somewhat apart from the

more stunted growth of the ridge, and within a few feet of the precipitous verge we had been treading, he said in a tremulous tone,—

"There!—that's the tree!—I wouldn't go any closer for a kingdom!"

"Well, Jabe, you'll wait here, won't you!" said I, as we walked on.

"I suppose I will—don't like it, though!"

We laughed slightly as we looked back.

The moment the tree had been pointed out to us, I remarked to Charlie, that I thought I recognised that tree; and when we reached it, judge our astonishment, to find it was the very one from which we had shot the bear a few hours before; and, on looking round, we perceived what had, during the excitement of the chase and conquest, entirely escaped our attention before, namely, that this was really the largest tree in sight, and that it stood exactly on the highest point of the ridge, and commanded a wider prospect than was possible from any other spot. These observations interested us not a little, and I looked around curiously for traces of the grave. Directly, Charlie uttered an exclamation—

"Here it is! I suppose this must be it, though it's a droll-looking affair for a grave!"

I stepped towards him, and found him kneeling on the bluff-side of the tree close to its roots, and peering between some flat rocks which he had partly uncovered of the mould and leaves.

"These flat rocks seem all to be regular—this must be the sepulchre, coffin, or whatever you choose to call it!" he continued, as he scratched away. "By Jove! look through that crack—I can see the skull!"

I knelt beside him, and sure enough a human skull was visible in the shallow sarcophagus. I immediately proposed to remove the stone, and take the skull out. I was at the time a vehemently ardent student of the new science of Gall and Spurzheim, and would cheerfully have risked a good deal for any such opportunity as this for examining the skull of a man whose character must evidently have been so very marked and extraordinary. It was no vulgar curiosity that caused me to disregard the slight remonstrance of Charlie, who muttered something about the pity to disturb the old fellow's rest. I lifted the thin flat stone, about eighteen inches in length by six in breadth, which lay across the grave over the head, and could then see the structure of the whole, as well as the great portion of the skeleton.

The grave was only about eighteen inches deep by about the same width, and was lined bottom and sides with flat unhewn stones of the same size of that I had taken from over the head, and the rest of the cover was the same, as well as what we call the headstone, which stood an inch and a half above the surface. I immediately recognised the sort of stone sarcophagus or grave, which is to be found in thou-

sands, covering sometimes miles of ground in the southern part of Kentucky and portions of Tennessee. The people adopting this curious mode of sepulture were extinct at a period earlier than the remotest reach of the tradition of the present *aboriginal* races, as we vainly enough call them! I have often examined these graves, where you could not make a step for miles but upon one. It was evidently a pigmy race, for these graves average not more than three feet in length. It was from these ancient burial-grounds that the old hunter had obtained his idea of sepulture. Who this singular people were, will probably never be satisfactorily discovered.

After examining the interior, without disturbing the limbs and body, I proceeded to lift the skull in my hand. I now stood erect, holding it off from me to study its proportions, when a sudden yell so startled me that I came near dropping it in the shock. I looked around quickly; Jabe, uttering a second yell of horror, was in the act of throwing his long rifle from him—then bending his head forward and fighting desperately about his ears, as if attacked by a whole nest of hornets, he bounded with another wild screech into the thicket, and, as far as I could hear him, he seemed to give a screech for each bound. I turned an inquiring look upon Charlie, who was rolling upon the leaves half dead with smothered laughter.

"Has he got into a yellow-jacket's nest, Charlie?"

I inquired, very soberly, of the ridiculous fellow, for I did not feel much inclined for laughing.

"No," he gasped at last, "but if you do not look out you will get into one, by that phrenological whim of yours. Jabe saw you with the skull in your hand, and it frightened him to death almost. You may rest assured that he will not stop now until every man within the circumference of twenty miles knows of this. There are not many of them to be sure, but they will be troublesome fellows to deal with."

"Well, what would you advise, Charlie?"

"Why, that we both make a bee-line for home, right off. I think I can find the way out, and it's no use meeting these fellows while they are exasperated. We'll return in a few weeks, when the thing has passed over; and as I have no hand in it, I'll make your peace with the superstitious fools, and we can have our hunt out, and hear uncle Jake's story of this Bill Smith."

"Well, I'm agreed—but stop a few moments, Charlie. As I have risked a lynching to get a sight of the old hunter's skull, I am going to have a good look at it now before we go!"

He uttered some exclamation of impatience, and sunk down upon the leaves again, when I was soon deep in the mystery of bumps. But the impatient hurry of my comrade compelled me before long to replace the skull. This was done with the most scrupulous care, as exactly in the position from

which I had taken it as possible. The grave was also re-covered with the same care, and restored as nearly as I could get it to the condition in which I found it. We soon after mounted our horses, with the bear meat tied behind us, and set off rapidly on our return to town. During the whole ride I was thinking of this extraordinary head, and what had been no doubt its equally remarkable owner. What a man this must have been, and what a career!—for, obscure as it appeared to have been, it was evident from the awe and dread his very bones inspired in the mind of the simple hunter, that he must have possessed traits while living quite as peculiar as his taste in burial, or the shape of his head. If my phrenological conclusions were of any value, his natural disposition was benevolent and social. What circumstances could have combined to drive one of his naturally strong and active social feelings into the terrible isolation of life and of death, in which I had thus far traced him?

Come what might, I vowed that at some future time I would make another effort to clear up this mystery of the "Hunter's Grave," and trace the story of this saturnine old warrior of the dark and bloody ground.

## CHAPTER VII.

### BILL SMITH, THE SILENT HUNTER.

I CARRIED out my resolution, to get at all that could be reached concerning the history of Bill Smith. On a new excursion, I saw and made my peace with uncle Jake—the one of his old comrades who had most of his confidence, and who lived nearest to the concluding scenes of his life. My friend Charlie and myself spent a week with him this time, and we were even successful, after the first day, in reconciling to us our old acquaintance and guide, Jabe, in spite of the terrible fright we had given him through my phrenological enthusiasm. Jabe seemed to have come finally to the logical conclusion, that, as the ghost had not yet ridden us into our graves, it meant to let us off, on the score of our being greenhorns, "who didn't know no better!"

Without pretending to dispute the metaphysical views of Jabe, we proceeded as usual to avail ourselves of his really uncommon skill as a guide and driver, while I made it a point when we returned from the day's hunt, and when the evening meal had given way to pipes and cigars, to bring old uncle Jake round to the topic of which he was most shy, while I was most eager—namely, the story of this

Bill Smith—for the more I heard of him the more curious the contradictions of his character appeared.

In furnishing this relation in my own language, the whole is necessarily a sort of patch-work narrative, the general tone of which I take from uncle Jake; but many of the important facts beside have been obtained in conversation with some others of the elderly survivors of that period, who had also been associates of Smith. Other circumstances of interest I picked up afterwards in North Carolina. I have thrown all these things together as to me seemed best, and as I have to trust entirely to memory, I may be liable to some inaccuracies; but such as it is, I offer you this account of old Bill Smith.

So far as I can make out the story, he seems to have been an orphan boy, thrown upon the charities of the kind world when quite young, by the sudden death of parents, whose only child he was, and who had come over with a ship-load of other emigrants from Old England.

It was not to be expected that a child with such an unfortunate patronymic as Smith was ever to be inquired after. He was lost in the undistinguishable multitude of that great family. Of course the fate of the poor nameless child—for Smith can hardly be called a name!—was apprenticeship under the system of indenture which then prevailed in the colonies. We hear of him as indentured to an old farmer

in North Carolina. He must have been eight years old, or thereabouts, at the time.

This old farmer, I suspect, was a veritable brute. The terms of indenture, besides a sufficiency of food and clothing, together with comfortable lodgings, expressly stipulated that the apprentice, thus bound for a term of years, for and in consideration of his services, was to be afforded the opportunity and allowed the necessary time for the acquisition of a good common school education. This part of his bond and duty, it seems, the old curmudgeon never did or would fulfil, thinking, I suppose, that learning was only one of the worldly vanities, and would most likely turn the boy's head. William seems to have been, from the beginning, remarkable more for wilfulness than any other trait; and I suppose it was quite as much because old Saunders refused to send him to school as from any inherent love of learning, that he determined to learn to read anyhow.

Little blue-eyed Mattie Saunders, who seemed a stray angel by the fireside of the old bear who called her child, somehow or other divined the wishes and purpose of the young Smith; and as her excellent mother had taken care to learn her to read as soon as she could speak, from a sort of melancholy presentiment that she had not long to tarry with her, she proved a remarkably successful instructress. Certain it is, that if he did not take to learning for learning's own sweet sake altogether, there proved to be a most

salutary attraction in that little white finger, gliding from letter to letter, to fix the attention of the wilful and headstrong boy.

He made such rapid progress that he soon became the teacher of his young mistress in turn; and as this relation between the young ones had to be kept scrupulously private, the pleasures of such stolen intercourse were greatly lightened.

This condition of things, charming enough, no doubt, to both parties, was most unpleasantly broken up on the accidental discovery of its existence by the old man, who, it seems, was furious thereat, and from that time commenced a series of petty persecutions, which almost drove the forlorn and wretched child mad.

The gentle consolations which he had heretofore received from sweet little Mattie were now denied him. He was banished, in mid-winter, to the barn to sleep on the hay, with only a single thin and tattered blanket to cover his shivering body.

The heroic boy bore all this for eighteen months without a murmur, and all for the sake of his little mistress, with whom, in spite of the vigilance of the father, he managed to obtain occasional interviews, in which, with many tears on both sides, the testimonials of their pure and innocent affection were hurriedly exchanged.

Old Saunders had but the one child; and having amassed a considerable fortune by the most parsi-

monious and usurious practices, he was constantly haunted by the apprehension, even in her childhood, that every one who approached little Mattie did so with an eye to her money. The child was tender-hearted, meek, and confiding, as her poor mother had been before her; and remembering how even he had wrought upon that poor woman, and induced her to confide to him her little all, he very properly concluded, that if such a creature as himself could thus win upon the confidence of the mother—even though it had only lasted for a few days after marriage—who might not aspire to win that of the child, that resembled her so closely?

He therefore watched her most jealously, and cut her off as much as possible from all intercourse with the outward world. Even in the distant perspective of womanhood, the idea of her marriage and a dower was almost death to him. To part with any portion of his precious and ill-gotten gold was like wringing the drops of his heart-blood upon the thirsty sands. He at once became furious the moment he discovered the intimacy and childish sympathy between the boy Smith and his child. There was no knowing what such might come to; and the starveling, whom he flattered himself he had apprenticed out of charity, might prove the viper upon his hearth.

Such were the barbarities practised upon the helpless orphan, that, although too manly himself ever to complain, they became the talk of the neighbourhood;

and while some persons openly asserted that old Saunders was trying to kill the boy by inches, others had determined to have him presented to the next Grand Inquest that sat in the county, for barbarity and neglect of duty.

Before, however, this very proper step could be taken, these persecutions had grown beyond any further possibility of endurance, and in a fit of ungovernable despair, the miserable child made up his rags into a little bundle, in which he also secreted a few scraps of food, which little Mattie, to whom he had made known his purpose, had obtained for him. He then crept into her little room by the window at night, and after weeping long, as if their little hearts would burst—in each other's arms—for each felt that this parting was from the only friend they had in the world—the poor boy comforted the tender mourner by assuring her, in a tone of singular confidence, that when he got to be a great man he was going to come back for her and make her his little wife.

Even at the early age of thirteen, the remarkable magnetic power which afterwards distinguished the man, was developed; for, in relating this occurrence himself in after-life, he said that when he spoke this in a bold, confident tone, the little trembler ceased to weep, and looking up into his face with a smile, said—

"Well, then, you may run along, Billy—I'll wait for you!"

He was off in an instant, and with her last kiss upon his lips, he plied his little legs as fast as they could carry him on the road which he had learned led to the capital of the state. His heart was light, his spirit bold, and the great world before him a shrouded mystery. He reached Raleigh in about a week, begging his way after his own little store gave out. He must have exhibited a great deal of audacity and address, for a child of his age, to have succeeded in getting through such a journey without being stopped by the authorities somewhere on the way. However, it is not more remarkable than many other of the events of his life.

After reaching Raleigh, his life was of course wretchedly precarious for some time. He prowled about the kitchens of the gentry at meal times, and lived upon such of the scraps of the tables as the negroes chose to throw to him in compassion; at night he crawled into some shed or stable to shiver in the straw till morning.

It happened that a kind-hearted old judge of the Circuit Court—Campbell by name—who was a very early riser, and always went, the first thing, to see how the cattle and horses came on, found one morning a feeble-looking child, with features ghastly and sharpened by hunger, lying in the trough of his cow-house, which was a close shed around three sides of the stable. He stooped, astonished, to gaze upon him. The little fellow had not rags enough upon

him to cover his nakedness, and had drawn some of the hay from the manger above to cover him, and the whole pile shook as he shuddered with the cold.

The old man gazed for a moment or two upon that troubled sleep, broken so often with faint moans, that they touched him deeply, and as the tears sprang to his eyes, he murmured—

"This must not be while I have a crust. Children must not starve in such a country as this!" So saying, he took the child gently in his arms, and bore it into his house, where his good old wife immediately took charge of the orphan, and soon warmed him to life again; but with the utmost exercise of her matronly skill, it was several days before the exhausted little one could recover strength enough to give any coherent account of himself.

Judge Campbell knew old Saunders well, and when he heard the boy's straightforward story, he had every reason to believe that it was true, every word of it. In the meantime he had got up a great interest in this little *waif and stray*, which it had pleased Providence to cast in his path; and as the old couple had no children, but two daughters who were married and comfortably settled, they finally determined to submit to what seemed like a requisition upon them by the Father of all on behalf of the fatherless, and adopted little Smith into their family as a son.

The circuits were some of them very large at that

time, as was especially the case with that of Judge Campbell's. Soon after this event he started on his round, and what was his inexpressible delight to find the first case on the doquet, in the county which had the honour of owning old Saunders for a citizen, marked "Commonwealth *v.* Samuel Saunders, for abducting, murdering, or otherwise unlawfully making away with an indentured male child, known as William Smith," &c.

The old man could scarcely contain his gravity upon the bench. He immediately ordered up the case, overruled all quibbling attempts to obtain a postponement, and it was generally remarked among the lawyers, that the usually lenient judge was more severe and harsh this term than they had ever known him to be before, during twenty years that he had sat upon the bench.

The case came on. The judge compelled the minutest scrutiny of all the facts, and a most conclusive case was made out from the evidence. His own lawyers were cowed, and the pale and frightened wretch listened with ghastly face to the judge's charge to the jury, which sounded, in its solemn tones and terrible denunciations, much more like a sentence of death than a charge—when, as he was apparently about winding up with positive instructions to the jury to find the prisoner guilty, there was the sound of carriage-wheels outside, and then a sudden commotion in the court.

In a moment the sheriff stepped forward and placed a slip of paper in the hands of the judge, who had paused at the first sound, and now read the paper calmly over twice; then deliberately throwing back his spectacles, he nodded assent to the sheriff, who, with a sort of half smile upon his face, made his way out of the court-room, and in a moment returned, pushing through the crowd, bearing in his arms the attenuated form of the missing boy, William Smith!

Such a thrill and murmur as ran through that court-room! The old miser, who had at first sprung to his feet, convulsively dropped, swooning, into his seat, for the child had been artfully draped in white, and looked as if it might have just come from the grave, and the hoary-headed villain really did not know whether it was dead or alive; for Mattie—tender, timid, gentle Mattie—had kept her little companion's counsel, as she had promised, in spite of all the threats of her father, and all the terrors of a public trial. Indeed, poor child, she did not know herself whether he was alive, and had been almost crying her life away, because, in her innocence, she supposed the neighbours, who had presented her father, must of course have known the fact of his murder before they did it. He was, in truth, dead to her!

The scene that followed baffles description. Old Saunders was borne from the court-room in convulsions, and shriek was heard following shriek from

him until the doors of the jail closed upon him. The judge then ran rapidly over the facts of the case as nearly as he could without detailing his own share in the plot—which was entirely unnecessary, as his object had been to further the cause of justice and humanity by punishing this monster morally, if it could not be done legally—and then exhibiting the boy to the jury, declared the bond of indenture to be forfeited, and that Saunders should be found in costs of suit, and compelled to give security for the support and education of the boy until he was eighteen.

Such was the eventful opening of the public career of "Billy," as poor Mattie called him. When we next hear of him he was a gay, voluble, dashing young lawyer, successful in his first case, and indeed in almost every other to which he put his hand. The old judge, his adopted father, had retired from the bench upon a handsome competency, and though now very decrepid, could not resist the gratification of listening to the forensic triumphs of his "pet nursling of the cow-trough," as he used humorously to term William. Whenever William had an interesting case on hand, the old man's carriage was invariably seen to roll up to the court-house door, and he to hobble in on crutches, when the dutiful young man was instantly at his side to assist him up the steps to the old accustomed chair, which still held its place for his occasional accommodation. After seeing him

comfortably seated, and his gouty feet adjusted with scrupulous care, he would return with redoubled energy to his case.

It was always noticed that when the venerable judge was present, the face of the young lawyer flushed with anxious excitement, and then he made his very happiest efforts, and carrying everything before him by the impetuous vehemence of his oratory, never lost a case. The father and patron, in one, would sit with half-closed eyes, in a sort of rapt ecstasy of enjoyment, while his lips occasionally moved in unconscious approval as the young man let off his happier hits. Smith soon became exceedingly popular, and his clients learned to avail themselves of this noble trait of generous gratitude towards his foster-father.

Smith, like Moreland, was too indifferent to the ordinary motives of action, to work under the stimulus of money, for which he never could be made to care; and when they found out this, they never failed, when he was to speak on a doubtful case, to have the old man informed of the day and hour, and thus drag him forth, well or ill—for go he would—to act as a stimulant upon his adopted son. They knew well that Smith would sooner lose his right arm than make a failure in a legal argument before his beloved patron. What is still more strange, neither Smith nor the old judge ever suspected this game, although it was regularly practised upon them until the death

of the latter, and was well known to every one about the courts.

The judge lived just long enough to bless the son of his adoption and his pride, who had been elected to the Assembly of the province the very year he came of lawful age. The good man then lay down in peace to die, for now he had seen the fruition of his hope. He left his property divided equally between his two daughters and the adopted son. He was soon followed by his faithful dame, and now the young orphan stood once more alone in the world. Not entirely alone either, for Mattie was still steadfast to her childish affection, and would listen to no suitors that came. To be sure, had she been disposed to coquetry, the indulgence would have been something difficult, for old Saunders became more and more miserly as he grew older, and more watchful of his daughter.

William and she had, however, in spite of his vigilance, managed, through the good offices of a relation of Mattie's, who had learned to admire Smith, and had always loved Mattie, to keep up a sort of broken correspondence by letter, and even to obtain an occasional interview, which was sufficient, during the long period I have passed over, to keep always bright and unbroken the links of that subtle chain which seemed from the first to be gradually binding their lives more inseparably in one.

Smith, though considered a rising young man

with a good fortune already in hand, and every prospect of great honours and a greater fortune before him, and therefore, of course, greatly sought after, yet never for one moment faltered in allegiance to his gentle mistress. When he came fully to understand the nature of his feelings towards her, that love was enough for him; it filled his being, and he asked no other. The subject was never mentioned between them until after the death of his adopted parents, for William seems to have always felt as if his first duty was to them—love, and himself afterwards.

He was now in such circumstances as permitted him to think of marriage. As it was utterly hopeless to expect the consent of the miserly old Saunders, he took the matter in his own hands, and in defiance of all opposition married the sweet Mattie, who was now of age, almost under his eyes; and leaving him to blaspheme and tear his hair at his leisure, quietly installed his bride as mistress of the old town mansion left him by the judge. Mattie proved a thrifty and a tender wife, and bore him sons and daughters, comely to look upon, and that gladdened their father's heart.

He, in the meantime, grew apace in manly honours, and at the time of the declaration of independence by America, was forty-five years of age, and one of the leading men of the patriot party.

After his marriage, Smith's character seemed to have undergone a change, which was specially

remarked by those who had watched his entrance upon public life. Up to the time of his marriage he had exhibited the most reckless disposition as to money matters. Although enjoying a lucrative practice, it was observed that he frequently wanted money. He had no apparent habits of extravagance that could account for such expenditure, so that he had the full benefit of all sorts of dark hints and surmises, not one of which approached the truth.

There were a few who knew him better, who could have told how a well-known class of indolent dependants on such liberality obtained from him more than half the dues for his services, by some servile appeal to his well-known magnanimity and disregard of money. He was systematically preyed on by a whole flock of such, who chuckled over the thought that they were gulling the smart young lawyer; a great mistake!—for his appreciation of character and motive was singularly quick.

From the day he married Mattie, however, he became a cautious, saving man; and the hungry wretches that had battened upon his generosity no longer found it possible to profit by his former careless liberality, though he was still ready to aid the case of real need, having never forgot his own early sufferings and privations. He had Mattie, beloved Mattie, to provide for now, and her precious little ones; there was to be no more trifling. He became a rigid economist, or rather, Mattie economized for

him, and all his expenditures were left entirely to her frugal and patient housewifery. He neither gave nor spent now without first taking counsel of his monitress, and how skillfully she managed may be shown in the fact that in twenty years after their marriage Smith was accounted one of the wealthiest men in the province. With this change came another, which was accounted quite as singular. As a young man, he had shown great ambition for political distinction; his prospects were extremely flattering, but he withdrew after serving one term, and steadily refused ever afterwards to be drawn again into public life.

But when the struggle for American independence was fairly entered upon, the William Smith of twenty-five woke up again suddenly, after having slept the sleep of domestic love and happiness for twenty years. Now again his contempt for gold, but as a medium of good, exhibited itself as strikingly, but in a more rational and consistent manner than before; now his carefully hoarded wealth flowed like water, and the gentle Mattie saw it go, and said never a word nor shed a tear. "Let the gold go!" the brave woman was wont to say—"it is all for liberty, and the children will be better for that than for all the wealth of the province!" And the gold did go!

There was no keeping back of the tribute there. William Smith had always exhibited a remarkable disinclination for scenes of bloodshed, considering the

character of the times. He did not, even now, join the patriot army; but, as the chief of the Vigilance Committee, did far better service with his prompt sagacity and profuse liberality than he could probably have done in the field. We cannot follow him through the details of the acts of this noblest period of his career; suffice it to say, that when the war ended in dear-bought independence, he first took time to look upon the condition of his own affairs; the survey exhibited himself nearly a *beggar!*

Everything had been swallowed up in the vortex, except some few fragments of landed estate; and they had only been spared him because nothing could be raised on them in such troublous times. He smiled upon Mattie as he looked around proudly upon five handsome manly boys and three daughters, and patting her still fresh cheek, said gaily, "It's all gone! —I am proud of the way it went—we have gained our holy cause—I am content!—what say you?"

"Dear Billy, what should I say? Am I not as proud of it as you?" was her reply.

"Well, Mattie, our old neighbour Daniel Boone has got back from Kan-tuck-ee, across the mountains, as he calls it. He says it is a great country, greater and more beautiful than any on this side the Alleghanies—and Daniel is a trustworthy man, you know!—and that plenty of splendid land is to be had for the settling and defending it; our boys are good riflemen—what say you, Mattie?"

Mattie turned pale, and laid her cheek against that of her husband, but she answered in a firm voice—

"I am ready, Billy, to follow you!"

And this is all that was said between them; it was settled!

This was a few years after the time that Daniel Boone and his brother returned for their wives and families. The news of his wonderful discoveries had flown like wildfire throughout Virginia and North Carolina, in both of which states he was well known. It had caused a great and general ferment among all bold and reckless spirits in the old states; as well those of the border, as those whom a long war had unfitted for any other than a life of adventure. Various companies had been fitted out in different directions who had followed the Boones. Settlements had been formed—forts built—and even municipal regulations commenced.

The place of general rendezvous was across the mountains, in what was called Powell's Valley, and the settlement on Clinch River was the frontier fort. The emigrants assembled in Powell's Valley in the spring of 1784, and when all collected, started on their long journey. Among them was the family of William Smith. He had converted all that was left him into live stock, implements, &c. Himself and his whole family—Mattie, and the girls included—were in the highest spirits in view of the novelty

and wild loveliness of the scene they were to traverse.

The emigrants numbered fifty souls, the great majority of them women and children. The journey, as they were prepared to expect, proved a rough and tedious one, but they saw nothing of Indians as yet. They arrived on the banks of the Licking River in the ordinary time. Harrod, who had several years since built the fort where Harrodsburg stands, was now returning from a visit to Virginia; and he, with several other of the principal men, Smith among them, left their families, as they supposed, with a sufficient guard in camp, and pushed forward to find Boone at either Harrodsburg or Boonesborough, and bring back some supplies.

Alas, for that parting! When they returned, six days afterwards, as the day was breaking, having accomplished the object of their mission, they found the camp just broken up, and following on the scattered trail, came up with the frightened remnant of the emigrants, in full retreat back for the settlements on Clinch River.

"Where is my wife? and where are my children?" demanded Smith, in a cold, stern tone, of the person under whose command the camp had been left.

"You will find them where you left them!" was the answer of the affrighted leader; "ask the Shawanees; they can tell you the rest."

"You have neglected your trust, and they are murdered," Smith replied, in a deliberate but trembling voice. "And yet we find you retreating! where is your manhood, wretch, coward!" he shrieked, as he sprang at the throat of the man, and hurled him to the ground with furious violence. Without pausing an instant to see what he had done, the unfortunate man turned, and with the speed of the wild deer, fled back to the deserted camp.

Several hours subsequent, Harrod and some others returned to look after the dead, and they found Smith stretched upon the bodies of Mattie and the children, with his arms spread in the endeavour to clasp them all in one embrace. He looked up with tearless eyes, and smiling with a terrible serenity, took the spade from the hand of the nearest person, and commenced digging a grave for them. The sturdy men around, awed by the speechless silence with which he proceeded, offered in low whispers to assist him. He motioned them away, and would not be aided. He thus worked on for hours, until a grave wide enough and deep enough had been hollowed; then reaching the cold form of Mattie from the spot where it lay, he clasped it to his breast a moment—held it off for one long, fixed gaze—pressed those dear lips, and laid her gently down to rest. He then placed her first-born son upon her right side, and as he saw the frown of desperate battle still on his fair young brow, and the shattered rifle clutched in the gripe of death,

he smiled a strange and terrible smile. Her youngest born he laid next her heart, and to each, as he disposed the stiffening form in order, he gave the last embrace and farewell kiss. This done, he stood on the side of the grave for some moments, gazing silently down upon the home he had lost, and then, without a word or groan, proceeded to fill up the grave. His comrades waited until he had finished, and had heaped a pile of stones to mark the place. They expected him to return with them now to the new camp which had been formed. He, however, took up his rifle, waved his hand in solemn adieu, and without speaking, disappeared on the trail of the Shawanees.

Little was generally known, and less said about Smith, from the time of this disappearance. It was generally believed that Boone, Harrod, and a few others, knew more of him than they chose to tell; the most that could be got out of any one concerning him was a significant touch of the forehead and shake of the head. Boone, in particular, was believed to have frequent interviews with him, as he would take with him at such suspected times a double supply of powder and lead.

For a year or two the mystery of his solitary life received no elucidation whatever, until a Shawanee having been made captive by the people of Boone's Fort, they heard from him a terrible story of an evil demon that had been haunting the war-path of the

Shawanees for nearly two years, and that from the hunting-trail and war-path together, more than thirty of their best braves, including several chiefs, had disappeared. The Shawanees believed that the Great Spirit was angry with them, and had sent a Medicine Spirit to punish them. They were nearly determined on this account to leave their hunting-grounds in Kan-tuck-ee for ever. When questioned as to whether they had ever got sight of this medicine, the answer was, that they had never seen it distinctly, but that of late their young men had pursued it often, and always came back with some of their number missing. They had never been able to overtake, or even to approach the mysterious and terrible Medicine Spirit.

After this report got abroad, men began to mention the name of Bill Smith again; but it was with a feeling of unaccountable dread, and in low voices, that they spoke. The timidity and uncertain movements of desultory attack which began to characterize the warfare of the Shawanees, once the best organized and most formidable of the tribes, came now to attract attention too. But all conjecture was set to rest, when, after a while, Smith was seen to make his appearance at the forts occasionally; but this was only when the Shawanees were known to be engaged in a foray. He usually came in ahead of the Indians, or, after some unaccountable fashion, suddenly appeared in the midst of a battle with them.

He was at the Blue Lick; at the Raisin; threw himself into Brian's Fort when it was stormed; and, indeed, he was known to have been in nearly all the principal battles in which Boone was present.

He was never heard to speak to any one—he came without a greeting, and went without farewell. He was regarded with a curious feeling of dread and respect by the border people, none of whom ever ventured to address a word to him. The Shawanees were driven first across the Kan-tuck-ee River, then across the Green River.

Bill Smith disappeared, and never crossed Green River again; they thought towards the north that he must finally have fallen a sacrifice to his monomania of vengeance. It will be remembered by what accident I found his grave, and heard from old uncle Jake Latham something with regard to his latter years.

After seeing the last canoe of the Shawanees launched upon the Ohio, and sending a death-messenger in farewell after it, the old man had built him a hut in the most inaccessible part of the Green River hills, and there the remainder of his days were spent in solitary quiet. He hunted just enough to furnish him with food, and powder and shot—never went near any one but uncle Jake, who made his purchases for him; and at the age of eighty-eight was found dead in his cabin. He seemed sleeping calmly, with a serene smile still upon his face, such

as might have greeted his Mattie waiting for him. His face in death alone had lost that still and fearful expression of ferocity, which was said never to have left it from the time of the death of Mattie and his children. Monomaniacs are proverbially known for the frequently marvellous cunning displayed by them in bringing about the accomplishment of the one object which is the single thought of their lives. Who, at this time, in weighing the acts of this remarkable man, while wasting under the long fever of his terrible vengeance, shall venture to forget, "Judge not, that ye be not judged!" It was ever thus that our fathers of the dark and bloody ground were tried!

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE HUNTERS OF KENTUCKY.

#### JAMES HARROD OF HARRODSBURG.

After all the bombast of hero worshippers, it is astonishing how little it takes to make a real hero! Like many of those important discoveries in mechanics which have revolutionized the world, the combinations are so simple, that when men come to realize them, the general exclamation is, "Why, I could have done that myself!" But, somehow, they

did not do it; and what renders the parallel still more complete is, that when the modest discoverer has accomplished the work, he looks upon the mighty achievement as nothing, and is not unfrequently surprised that men should so wonder at a thing so plain. So also the true hero never understands why men should marvel that he has only done his duty.

In the long protracted border-warfare by which the newer states of America have been recovered from the wilderness, deeds of daring and heroism passed unrecorded, which were, notwithstanding, as worthy of fame as many that have won the highest plaudits of the historian and poet. One of those men of nature, whose large heart and giant thews best fitted them to cope in mastery with such conditions, was James Harrod, the founder of Harrodsburg, Kentucky, and one of the bravest of the early companions of Boone.

So little was known of the youth, James Harrod, that the histories of that time do not even name the colony from whence he came, nor the year in which he emigrated; they only know that he came early with Boone, was most probably a Virginian, went back to that state, and returned to Kentucky in 1774; joined Colonel Lewis and his followers on the way, and was with them in the battle at the mouth of the Kenhawa; and in the next year settled himself on the site of the present town of Harrodsburg.

This is about the extent of the chronology bearing upon that early period of his history.

But for years before this period, the name of the stalwart young hunter was familiar along the borders, and associated with that of Boone in many a feat of hardihood and generous chivalry. He was tall, strong, modest, and simple. He had read no book but that of nature, knew no art but wood-craft, and hated nothing on earth but an Indian and a pole-cat. His rifle was the longest, the heaviest, and the surest; his frank eye was never at a fault to mark the distant game, to meet the gaze of deadly foe, or glance back the smile of a friend; a man of action, not of words.

The traditions of that time preserve many a touching narrative of the deeds of this young hunter. His skill on the war-trail, and his vigilance and wonderful powers of endurance, soon made him one of the chief supports of the feeble settlements, then struggling to hold and occupy this wide land, which had for centuries been the object of dispute between powerful tribes of savages on the north and the south. The simplicity of his habits, his fresh constitution, and his great frame, endowed with remarkable natural strength, everywhere gave him supremacy, even among the hardy pioneers of the borders.

Such were his habits of incessant activity, and so cool his self-reliance, that he rarely waited for companions, on the longest and most dangerous of his

expeditions. He would often be gone for weeks, and even months together, no one knew whither, or for what end, and the first thing heard of him would be his sudden appearance to put the settlements on their guard against the approach of some Indian war-party. During these long absences his industry was untiring; all the game that he could kill was cured and stored, after the manner of the Indians, beyond the reach of wild beasts, or even of the sagacity of his teachers. To these stores he could resort at any time of scarcity, for supplies for the block-houses.

His knowledge of Indian life was such that he frequentry continued to hunt alone, when he knew well, by the signs around him, that Indians were hunting on the same ground. On one such occasion he had perceived several fine deer feeding, in a small open glade in the forest near the Kentucky River. He had approached them with much precaution, for a shot, and having gained the desired point, was kneeling behind a tree, and in the act of raising his rifle to take aim, when the buck of the herd lifted its head suddenly, and uttered the peculiar shrill whistle which indicates that they have either seen or smelt danger.

Harrod was too prompt a woodsman not to perceive instantly, from the direction in which the deer turned its head, that there was another foe present than himself. He remained motionless, holding his breath, when, at the sharp crack of a rifle from the opposite

side of the glade, the startled buck sprang into the air and fell dead.

The report of Harrod's rifle followed so instantly that it seemed a mere prolongation of the first sound; a nobler quarry bit the dust, the ball of the backwoodsman met the proud heart of a Shawanee chief, who had leaned forward from his covert to fire. Harrod had known for several days that there was a hunting-party of Shawanees in the neighbourhood.

At another time his own wary game was nearly played successfully upon himself. He was on a buffalo trail leading to the Blue Licks. He had been hunting for several days with great success, and this time had seen no Indian sign, and was not aware that any had come down. He had wounded a large bull that had left the herd, and stood at bay several miles distant, in a thick wood; Harrod was obliged to approach it with great precaution, for the animal was now very dangerous, as is always the case when it is badly wounded.

He had gained his position, and when in the very act of firing, caught glimpse of a warrior taking aim at him from behind a tree. He fired, for it was too late to help that, but in the same instant dropped as if killed. The warrior fired of course, and his ball made a hole through the wolf-skin cap of Harrod as he fell. He lay perfectly still, while the Indian, after stopping to load his rifle, as they always do before leaving cover, now approached him to get his scalp, but did so with characteristic wariness, leaping from

tree to tree; he came near, and seeing that the body lay perfectly still, sprang forward, scalping-knife in hand; but as he stooped to grasp the scalp-lock, quick as lightning the long and powerful arms of Harrod were clasped about his neck, and with the sudden spring of a waking panther, the warrior was in his grasp and helpless on the ground beneath him.

There is yet another anecdote of his individual prowess, with something of the same character as those given above, which, although a household story in Kentucky, is not so well known elsewhere.

The Shawanees had made several attacks upon Boone's Station, against which settlement they had always expressed the bitterest animosity, on account, no doubt, of its having been the first white settlement held in the country. Boone was absent at the Licks, with a great part of the men of the station, making salt. The prowling parties of Indians had killed their cattle, driven in their hunting-parties, and so shortened their supplies of meat, that the little garrison was reduced to great straits.

At this juncture Harrod made his appearance unexpectedly, on his return from one of his long expeditions. Finding the condition of things, he first proposed to some of the remaining men, that they should accompany him to one of the nearest of his depots of meat. The risk was very great; and Harrod perceiving from the hesitation that the men were not willing to go, left the station that night alone, telling

the women to be of good cheer, that he would bring them back meat.

He found game very shy in the morning, and as there was plenty of Indian sign about, he determined to have the first meat he could get, and return with it as soon as possible to the relief of the station. He came in sight of a small herd of deer, which were moving as if they had been lately startled, and were still on the look-out; this caused him to use great circumspection. It was not long before he came across signs which induced him to think that there were several Indians close at hand. The daring hunter cared nothing for the odds, but coolly resolved to have one of those deer or lose a scalp, and of the latter there surely seemed to be a great likelihood.

This would have been foolhardiness with any other man, but with Harrod it was entirely a matter of course. He had never turned aside from his path for the red man, nor did he ever intend to do so. He claimed those hunting-grounds, too, and those deer were his, if he could win them, and his he intended they should be.

His circumspection was not a little increased on perceiving the marks of the moccasin on the trail of the deer. These were before him, and he might come upon them at any moment. This did not deter him, for he saw at a glance his advantage, as he was on the look-out for them, while they were on the look-out for the deer, and, evidently from the carelessness of the

sign they left, entirely unconscious of his proximity. He had followed on in this manner for several miles, taking care to expose his body as little as possible, and, indeed, advancing from tree to tree all the time, as if in a bush fight.

The sudden whistle of a deer, followed instantly by the ring of two rifles close on his left, gave him warning that the time for business had come. The Indians kept close, and as he was peeping cautiously round a tree, endeavouring to get a sight of them, a rifle ball from the right whizzed through the heavy mass of black hair that fell down over his shoulders, stinging his neck sharply as it grazed past. He crouched instantly, and all was as still as death for a long time, for the two on the left had taken the hint, and lay close, while the Indian on the right did the same, while he reloaded and watched for another chance.

Here was a fix certainly for any common man, beleaguered on two sides, and it might be on every side for all he could tell. But from what is known of Harrod's character, it may be questioned if it was not a source of pleasure rather than of fear, for it was just such a dilemma as he delighted to get himself into, for the pleasure of getting himself out again.

The foot of the tree at which he crouched was surrounded by bushes or shrubs about three feet high, and he was obliged to lift his head above these before he could fire. He wore his famous wolf-skin cap, as usual; and after waiting till he was convinced that

there was no chance of getting a sight of the cautious foe, he placed it upon the ram-rod of his rifle, and, after some prefatory manœuvring among the shrubs, to show that he was getting restless, gradually and cautiously elevated the cap.

The ring of the three rifles was almost simultaneous, as it rose a little above the bushes; and before the echoes had died away, the death-shriek of the warrior on the right followed them into the shadows. Harrod lay still for a long time before he concluded to try the manœuvre again; the cap was cautiously elevated once more, and this time drew but one fire, for the Indians had taken warning. It effected all that Harrod required, however, for it disclosed the exact position of these two. He had only known the direction before, but not the position, as his eyes had been occupied in watching the one on the right. In less than half a minute, the Indian who had fired exposed part of his body in sending home his rod; Harrod shot him through the heart.

The other Indian commenced a rapid retreat. He got off, but Harrod thought he carried a third ball with him. They had been entirely deceived by the manœuvre of the cap, and the survivor was clearly of the opinion, that, as he did not doubt they had killed two, there must be several white men there yet. Harrod proceeded at his leisure to dress the two deer they had brought down, and that night entered the station, to the great joy of all, with a full load of meat.

The benevolence of Harrod seems to have been equal to his energy. His hut, one of the first erected in the country, became at once the nucleus of a station. Thither the surveyors, the speculators, the hunters and emigrants, flocked for shelter and protection, and the names of Harrodsburg and Boonesborough became the first identified in the minds of weary adventurers of every grade in this dangerous region, with the prospect of rest and the hope of security. Other huts had rapidly clustered around his, until more secure defences had become necessary, and a fort was built.

Thus, under the shelter of these two names, Boone and Harrod, the permanent occupation of Kentucky by the white race commenced.

These men, though both comparatively young, seem to have exhibited a good deal of the ancient patriarchal character, which was so much needed in the elementary condition of the society they were organizing. All new comers were received with open arms, and were watched over, and guarded and guided like children, until they learned to take care of themselves; and, what was still more remarkable, were allowed, without a murmur, to avail themselves of nearly all the fruits of the extraordinary labours and sufferings of their unselfish guardians.

Boone, for example, who might, as I mentioned before, have been the richest man in the whole West, had he been as grasping as he was shrewd and daring, possessed himself of no land, but died in poverty,

without claim to one spot in that paradise to which he had led his countrymen. Harrod exhibited the same unselfish and unworldly character. When a new settler came, he inquired for a locality; Harrod's knowledge of the surrounding country was at his service; he shouldered his axe, and helped the newcomer to run up a hut. If the family was out of meat, Harrod found it out. He was off to the woods, and soon a fine deer, or fat bear, or quarter of a buffalo, was placed at their disposal. If their horses had strayed in the range, with which the husband was not yet familiar, and no ploughing could be done, Harrod's incessant activity has made the discovery in passing, that something was wrong in the new clearing—his voice is heard shouting from the fence, "Hilloa, Jones! What's the matter? No ploughing done yet, I see! Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"Well, yes!—the old horse been gone these five days—can't find him down there in that canebrake range—been lost myself already two whole days in looking for him, and I've just about given it up."

"Never mind, Jones, you'll get used to that range sometime before long—that horse of yours is a blood-bay, aint he?"

"Yes; snip down the nose, and left hind-foot white—collar marked bad on the shoulders."

"Good morning, Jones."

A few hours afterwards, Jones' horse, with his snip

on his nose, is quietly driven up to the fence and turned in—James Harrod walks on.

News come into the station that the Indians have attacked the house of a settler five miles distant, and murdered all the family but the two daughters, whom they are hurrying off to captivity—the war-cry of Harrod is instantly heard.

"Come, boys! come, boys! we must catch those rascals—we can't spare our girls!"

While his dark complexion glows with enthusiasm, and his black eye flames again, the men know their leader, for he is off without them in a moment, and they are soon ready.

The swift and tireless pursuit, the wary approach to the camp, the night-attack, with its short, fierce struggle, the rescue, the return, were all common incidents of their wild life.

In the capacity of spy, guide, or ranger captain, his excursions into the Indian country were daring and frequent. There was no enterprise too audacious for his enthusiasm, none requiring patience, dexterity, endurance of hunger, thirst, and fatigue, too serious for his cool self-reliance to undertake, and that most frequently alone. He avoided, when possible, having other men with him, for, he said, they always complained of the hardships or the dangers before the fun was fairly commenced with him, and therefore it cost him more trouble to take care of them than to do all there was to be done himself, twice over.

This extraordinary love of solitary adventure was one of the marked characteristics of James Harrod. Indeed, the Indians christened him the "Lone Long-Knife," and greatly dreaded his mysterious prowess.

He on several occasions entered their villages in the night to ascertain their plans; and once, when discovered by a young warrior, struck him to the earth with his huge fist, and then threw himself into the neighbouring forest, though not without being seen and pursued; twenty or thirty warriors followed him, and so close were they upon his heels at the start, that their rifle balls showered like hail about him.

The swiftness of Indian runners has passed into a proverb, but they had a man before them more swift and tireless than they. He gained so much upon them that by the time they reached the Miami, which was ten miles distant, there were only three warriors who seemed to be continuing the chase.

Harrod swam the river without hesitation; as he reached the opposite bank they came up, and fired at him as he climbed the bank; the river was wide here, and the balls fell short. He now took a tree upon the edge of the forest, and removing the waterproof cover of deer's bladder from the lock of his rifle, prepared for them, should they attempt to cross the river. The Indians hesitated a moment, for it had now been some time full daylight, and they seemed to have some

apprehension that he might make a stand; but hearing at this instant the coming yells of those who had fallen behind, they replied, and plunged into the stream.

Harrod waited until they were more than half across, when at the crack of his rifle the foremost sank; the other two paused, then turned to go back, but before they could get out of range, he wounded a second desperately, who gave himself up to the current and was swept down. The third, by a series of rapid dives, like the manœuvres of a wounded wild duck, succeeded in baffling the aim of Harrod, and got out of range.

Harrod heard the furious howl of the main body of his outwitted pursuers, who had reached the river as he was making off again through the forest; the chase was not continued further.

What adds not a little to the dramatic interest of this adventure, is, that when, two hours afterward, Harrod struck the bank of the Miami again, he saw upon a pile of drift wood, which had collected at the mouth of one of the small tributaries of the stream, some living object, which he took for a large turtle glistening in the sun, as he struggled to drag his unwieldy body upon the logs to bask.

He stopped to gaze; and imagine his astonishment, when he saw a tall Indian drag his body slowly from the water, and finally seat himself upon the logs. He had lost his gun, and commenced endeavouring to stifle

the bleeding from a bullet wound in his shoulder. Harrod knew that it was the second Indian he had shot, and who had most probably reached one of the pieces of drift wood, of which the swollen river was at present full, and sustained himself by it all this distance, badly wounded as he was.

Here was a trial for such a man as Harrod; his foe was wounded and helpless; take him prisoner he feared would be impossible, and letting him escape he felt to be contrary to his duty to his own people. He thought within himself some little time before deciding upon his course, for shoot the poor wretch he could not.

His determination formed, he made a wide circuit, and crept cautiously upon the wounded warrior from behind; a large tree stood close to the drift, which being gained, Harrod laid down his gun, then suddenly stepping into full view from behind the tree, raised his hands to show that he was unarmed.

"Uguh!" grunted the astonished warrior, making a sudden movement as if to plunge into the water again. Harrod placed his hand upon his heart, spoke two words in the Shawanee tongue, when the Indian paused, and looking at him a moment earnestly, bowed his head in token of submission. Harrod helped him to the bank, tore his own shirt and bound up the wound with cooling herbs; and then, as he found the savage unable to walk, threw him across his broad shoulders, and bore him, not to the station, but to a

cave which he used as one of his places of deposit. No one knew of the existence of this hiding-place but himself, and he had discovered it by the accident of having driven a wounded bear into it.

The entrance was very small, and covered with briars; pushing these aside, you looked down into what seemed a deep well; when the eye became accustomed to the darkness, you could gradually discover a dry, white bottom. Harrod had descended into it by means of a pole ladder which he had let down; this ladder, which is essentially a frontier contrivance, consists merely of a stout sapling, which is thick set with limbs; the sapling being cut down, the limbs are chopped off within six inches from the trunk, thus leaving excellent foothold to climb by.

When you reached the bottom, which was about twelve feet below the surface, you found yourself in a small, but irregularly-shaped room, the ceiling of which was hung with many beautiful and fantastic stalactites, from among which, and at the farther extremity of the room, a small, clear stream poured steadily down into a white, round basin, which it had worn into the solid limestone.

The little stream, after passing across the length of the chamber, found vent through a dark hole in the wall, nearly large enough to admit a man crawling in on his hands and knees. Here, over the whitest sand, it escaped into unknown caverns beyond. From the point of every stalactite on the ceiling a drop of water

fell slowly upon stalagmites rising to meet them, many of which had assumed the most extraordinary shapes. About twelve feet square of the ceiling and floor of this singular subterranean chamber was as dry as tinder.

I am thus particular in describing this cave, having once visited it, and been singularly impressed with the peculiarities of the place. Among other things, the steady dropping of the water upon the floor sounded like a low harmonicon, the sweetness of which I shall never forget.

In this strange hiding-place, as the story goes, Harrod concealed his wounded foe, for the generous hunter having once determined to aid him, possessed too much magnanimity to subject the proud warrior to the humiliation worse to him than death, of being paraded before his white foes as a prisoner. Harrod took care of him till his recovery, visiting him regularly on his hunting excursions. When the warrior grew strong again, Harrod gave him a supply of provisions, and pointing towards the north, bade him return to his people, and tell them how the "Long-Knife" treats his wounded foe.

Nothing was ever heard directly from this warrior again, though Boone, who was aware of the circumstance, and who was taken prisoner by the Shawanees a short time afterwards, always attributed the kind treatment he received from the Indians, and their good faith to eighteen of his men, to the good offices

of this grateful savage. These men were engaged, under his command, in making salt at the saline springs, and surrendered at his own suggestion, he having been surprised and taken prisoner while hunting, and the promise of kind treatment and release having been pledged to him by the Indians. They, after taking their arms, ammunition, &c., permitted the men to return to the station unharmed. They took Boone with them, however, to Canada, where he was shortly ransomed.

The popularity of Harrod became very great; for those many extraordinary feats and kind acts were not his only claims on the now rapidly-increasing population of Kentucky for their respect and gratitude. His manly wisdom and counsel was fully equal to his efficiency in the field; for though to the last he could barely write his name, and continued to be a man of few words, one short sentence of his, direct, as it always was, and to the purpose, was of greater value in those times than all that inexperienced talkers could utter in a year.

He was elected colonel of the new state's militia, married happily a genuine Kentucky girl, and was universally venerated, though yet scarcely past his prime. His modesty was unconquerable, and he shrunk from all honours which he could possibly avoid.

Strange to say, not even the endearments of his happy home, the love of his fellow-citizens, or the

charms of society, could win him from that singular passion for solitary hunting for which Harrod was so remarkable. He would still, rifle in hand, bury himself for weeks, and even months, in some unpenetrated fastness of the wilderness, from whence he would return as unexpectedly as he went, laden with the trophies of the hunt.

Once he thus disappeared never to return! By what casualty of the chase, or in what deadly contest with his Indian foes, he perished at last, no one could ever more than conjecture.

Thus died a true hero, as he would no doubt have chosen best to die, amidst those wild, stern scenes he had so dearly loved, and in fair battle with the chances that he gloried most in daring.

He left, I believe, one daughter; and a large and respectable family descended from her still live in Harrodsburg and the neighbourhood.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE FOX, AND FOX-HUNTING IN AMERICA.

REYNARD is a famous fellow, to be sure! It behooves me to be somewhat careful in making my approaches to a person of such world-wide celebrity.

There are about twelve well-known species be-

longing to this genus, four of which are native to North America. There are many disputes among naturalists with regard to the varieties of this animal. Instead of twelve, the number of species has been extended to sixteen. Mr. Audubon, in his new work, the "Quadrupeds of America," has discovered that many of those animals which have been named and set down as distinct species, are only varieties. As, for instance, the cross fox, the black or silver fox, and the red fox, have each been classed as a separate species heretofore; but he has shown, I think, conclusively, that the two first are mere varieties of the last.

He found all three together in one litter. This fact in itself is very strong proof that he is right, for the gray fox is never known to breed with either of these varieties; and the same is true of the swift fox and the arctic fox. This is somewhat singular, for the red fox is well ascertained to breed with the wolf and dog; while a mortal antipathy is thought to exist between it and the gray fox; so great, indeed, as to give rise to a common opinion that the gray fox is exterminated by the red wherever it makes its appearance.

Furthermore, the celebrated Dr. Richardson adheres to the same opinion, in common with the Indians, hunters, and trappers, who have a saying, with regard to the red fox, "This is not a cross fox yet, but it is becoming so!" The European fox is

subject to similar varieties, and the *Canis crucigera* of Gessen differs from it in the same way that our cross fox does from the red one. On the whole, then, I regard it as a safe conclusion, that the red and gray foxes are the only distinct species we have within the present limits of the states.

The slight variations which have given rise to the belief of the existence of so many species, are not at all extraordinary or peculiar; and, indeed, this is the common cause of an unnecessary accession of species, which complicates the natural history of quadrupeds. Where such differences are not owing to age or sex, they are frequently due to the accidents of disease, locality, climate, &c. I once saw three cubs taken from the bed of a gray fox, two of which were white as milk, and the other gray. It would have been very wise of me to have announced the discovery of a new species on the strength of these Albinoes!

There is a curious and interesting case in point given from the personal experience of Dr. Bachman, the editorial associate of Mr. Audubon in the "Quadrupeds." After premising that the swiftness of the animal has most probably been greatly exaggerated, he says:—

"In regard to the cunning of this variety, there may be some truth in the general opinion, but this can be accounted for on natural principles; the skin is considered very valuable, and the animal is always regarded as a curiosity; hence the hunters make

every endeavour to obtain one when seen, and it would not be surprising if a constant succession of attempts to capture it, together with the instinctive desire for self-preservation possessed by all animals, should sharpen its wits and render it more cautious and wild than those species that are less frequently molested. I remember an instance of this kind, which I will here relate.

"A cross fox, nearly black, was frequently seen in a particular cover. I offered what was in those days considered a high premium for the animal in the flesh. The fox was accordingly chased, and shot at by the farmers' boys in the neighbourhood. The autumn and winter passed away, nay, a whole year, and still the fox was going at large. It was at last regarded by some of the more credulous as possessing a charmed life, and it was thought that nothing but a silver ball could kill it. In the spring I induced one of our servants to dig for the young foxes that had been seen at the burrow, which was known to be frequented by the cross fox. With an immense deal of labour and fatigue, the young were dug out from the side of a hill; there were seven. Unfortunately, I was obliged to leave home, and did not return until after they had been given away, and were distributed about the neighbourhood.

"Three were said to have been black, the rest were red. The blackest of the young whelps was retained for us; and I frequently saw at the house of

a neighbour another of the litter that was red, and differed in no respect from the common red fox. The older my little pet became, the less it grew like the black, and the more like the cross fox. It was, very much to my regret, killed by a dog when about six months old, and so far as I can recollect, was nearly of the colour.

"The following autumn I determined to try my hand at procuring the enchanted fox, which was the parent of these young varieties, as it could always be started in the same vicinity. I obtained a pair of fine fox-hounds, and gave chase. The dogs were young, and proved no match for the fox, which generally took a straight direction through cleared fields for five or six miles, after which it began winding and twisting among the hills, where the hounds on two occasions lost the scent, and returned home.

"On a third hunt, I took my stand near the corner of an old field, at a spot I had twice observed it to pass. It came at last, swinging its brush from side to side, and running with great rapidity, three-quarters of a mile a-head of the dogs, which were yet out of hearing. A good aim removed the mysterious charm. I killed it with squirrel-shot without the aid of a silver bullet. It was nearly jet-black, with the tip of the tail white. This fox was the female which had produced the young of the previous spring, that I have just spoken of; and as some of

them, as I have already said, were cross foxes, and others red foxes, this has settled the question in my mind, that both the cross fox and the black fox are mere varieties of the red.

"Here I will dismiss this question, premising the conviction confirmed out of my own experience by the facts given above, that the three varieties, the black, cross, and red foxes, will be found to be about as nearly identical as three specimens of the common American skunk, taken from the same bed, one of which will be banded, another barred, and another mottled.

"The swift fox inhabits the Missouri and Platte Rivers, west to the Rocky Mountains. It is a very extraordinary creature. Although the smallest of American foxes, it is by far the fleetest. In traversing the wild region where it is native, I heard from the hunters and trappers most marvellous tales of its swiftness, some of which placed it even alongside the horse and antelope in this respect, and far beyond any other animal on the plains. These stories are to be taken with considerable allowance. I saw it frequently, but had no fair opportunity of testing its speed thoroughly, though there is one observation which I made that may be worth giving in this connection.

"The vast bare extent and undulating surface of those plains seem to have had a somewhat remarkable effect in developing powers of flight and pursuit

in most of the creatures inhabiting them, and more particularly in the smaller ones; and there is quite as much of this exaggerated story-telling to be met with upon the lips of these same wandering hunters and trappers, with regard to the great-eared rabbit of the plains further south. This animal is represented by them as a miracle of speed; and I am, from my own observation, disposed to give a large proportion of credit to their representations.

"I have witnessed in them such astonishing power of getting over the ground, that they almost seemed to defy pursuit. It was more like flying than running. The total absence on these wild plains of any of those facilities for concealment, refuge, or escape, which are afforded elsewhere, by trees, shrubs, rocks, holes, &c., renders the whole game of flight and pursuit a plain, straightforward matter of hard running on both sides; so that it is no great wonder after all, if the speed of both the predatory and fugitive animals should be somewhat cultivated. As civilization is extended toward these remote regions, we shall know more of the habits of these fleet children of the solitudes, it is to be hoped.

"The arctic fox is more familiar to us, though really far more distant, and living among more unpropitious and apparently inaccessible fastnesses.

"I shall merely say of it, that it is the only one of the genus which seems at all to justify the remark, that 'a large fox is a wolf, and a small wolf may be

termed a fox.' It is much more like the jackal and wolf in its habits; like them, it is gregarious when pressed with hunger, and is known, like them, to hunt in packs.

"It is a question now of grave dispute, whether the red fox is indigenous to the American continent, or is only a late emigrant from Britain—one party strenuously maintaining that the red fox of America is entitled to the glory of such high descent, while the other sturdily contends that our fox is an aboriginal fox, and by no means deserving of such hard names as Chaucer used with regard to the English fox, when he styles him 'false murderour; dissimulour; and new Iscariot.'

"This dispute is rather curious and amusing than serious. I shall look over some of the grounds of the controversy. One party affirms that the European fox was brought over by one of the continental governors, who was an ardent sportsman, and who turned a pair or more loose to breed on Long Island; that finally they escaped, they or their descendants, over to the mainland, and have since migrated south and west. The other party contends that it is a native species, and comes from the north, migrating —as many other species of quadrupeds and birds, as well as nations of men have done—towards the south.

"The last argument appears to me to be the true one, because, in the first place, although there are many points of general resemblance, which might

deceive any but careful naturalists, yet it has been found, when the two animals have been brought together and critically compared, that they are clearly distinct. This, of itself, ought to be enough to settle the question; but when we come to remember, in the second place, that in all its varieties the red fox is a northern animal, and that, from its cunning and sagacity, it would always make a convenience of the neighbourhood of man, for the purpose of preying upon his domesticated creatures, we can well understand how its progress south should have been quite as gradual as that of well-stocked barn-yards and fat flocks of geese.

"The case is to me a perfectly plain one; and the answer to the multiplied inquiries I hear from old sportsmen, 'Whether is it that the red fox has degenerated, or our hounds, through careful breeding, have been improved in speed—since it is true that the red fox is now taken with ease in two hours at most, when we thought ourselves fortunate, when he first came amongst us, if we run him down in twelve'—is equally plain. He is a northern animal, and the fat living you give him, and your warm climate, have degenerated the gaunt starveling of the north."

Godman, in his "American Natural History," disposes of the question in quite a summary manner, and, no doubt, greatly to his own satisfaction. He says:—

"By the fineness of its fur, the liveliness of its

colour, length of limbs, and slenderness of body, as well as the form of its skull, the red fox of America is obviously distinguished from the common fox of Europe, to which, in other respects, it bears a resemblance sufficiently striking to mislead an incidental observer."

But to suppose this question of varieties settled, we may proceed in justice to say, that with all his persecution Reynard has never been remarkable for ill-nature, except after the manner of a practical joker, who gives and takes; he has too great regard for his ancient and privileged character as a humorist, ever to show his teeth savagely, except when fully surrounded, and then he dies game. No wonder the gall of bitterness should be stirred within him at the venal and unfair method of pursuit common in the northern states, where the cross fox is hunted by countrymen on foot through the snow.

The dog used is a mongrel cross upon the cur hound and greyhound. This animal is stronger and swifter than any thorough-bred, and better suited for this peculiar purpose; for the object is simply to get the skin and turn it into dollars and cents in the most direct possible manner. There is no poetry or chivalry in this kind of chase, of which Dr. Bachman gives the following account:—

"In the fresh-fallen and deep snows of mid-winter, the hunters are most successful. During these severe snow-storms, the ruffled grouse, called in the eastern

states the partridge, is often snowed up and covered over; or sometimes plunges from the wing into the soft snow, where it remains concealed for a day or two. The fox occasionally surprises these birds, and as he is usually stimulated at this inclement season by the gnawings of hunger, he is compelled to seek for food by day as well as by night; his fresh track may be seen in the fields, along the fences, and on the skirts of the farm-yard, as well as in the deep forest. Nothing is easier than to track the fox under these favourable circumstances, and the trail having been discovered, it is followed up until Reynard is started.

"Now the chase begins; the half-hound yells out, in tones far removed from the mellow notes of the thorough-bred dog, but equally inspiriting, perhaps, through the clear frosty air, as the solitary hunter eagerly follows, as fast as his limited powers of locomotion will admit. At intervals of three or four minutes, the sharp cry of the dog resounds, the fox has no time to double and shuffle, the dog is almost at his heels, and speed is his only hope of life. Now the shrill baying of the hound becomes irregular; we may fancy he is at the throat of his victim; the hunter is far in the rear, toiling along the track which marks the course so well contested, but occasionally the voice of his dog, softened by the distance, is borne on the wind to his ear.

"For a mile or two the fox keeps ahead of his

pursuer; but the latter has the longest legs, and the snow impedes him less than it does poor Reynard. Every bound and plunge into the snow diminishes the distance between the fox and his relentless foe. Onward they rush, through field, fence, brushwood, and open forest, the snow flying from bush and briar as they dart through the copse, or speed across the newly-cleared field.

"But this desperate race cannot last much longer; the fox must gain his burrow, or some cavernous rock, or he dies. Alas! he has been lured too far away from his customary haunts, and from his secure retreat, in search of prey; he is unable to reach his home; the dog is even now within a foot of his brush.

"One more desperate leap, and with a sudden snappish growl he turns upon his pursuer, and endeavours to defend himself with his sharp teeth. For a moment he resists the dog, but is almost instantly overcome. He is not killed, however, in the first onset; both dog and fox are so fatigued that they now sit on their haunches, facing each other, resting, panting, their tongues hanging out, and the foam from their lips dropping on the snow.

"After fiercely eyeing each other for a while, both become impatient—the former to seize his prey, the other to escape. At the first leap of the fox the dog seizes him, and does not loose his hold until the fox lies motionless at his feet.

"The hunter soon comes up: he has made several *short cuts*, guided by the baying of his hound; and striking the deep trail in the snow again, at a point much nearer the scene of the death-struggle, he hurries toward the place where the last cry was heard, and pushes forward in a half run until he meets his dog, which, on hearing his master approach, generally advances towards him, and leads the way to the place where he has achieved his victory.

"There are yet more unfair modes of taking this animal known in the north, the very mention of which would make the genuine fox-hunter boil over with indignation.

"The fox is pursued over the snow by one of the mongrels above mentioned, until he is fairly earthed, when the *sportsman*, as he is called, comes up with spade and pick-axe on his shoulder, and after coolly surveying the ground, prepares to dig him out. His labour at this season is worth something less than a dollar a-day; and if he succeeds in digging out the poor fox, he will receive from five to seven dollars for the valuable skin, a considerable advance upon what he gets for fair and honourable labour.

"Alas! poor Reynard! The countryman throws off his coat, goes doggedly to work, and after hours of digging, succeeds in dragging out the poor beast, which can no longer resist its fate, and then swings the inglorious trophy upon his back to trudge away, triumphing in the prospective dollars. It may be he

has to smoke him to death in his hole, or else strike him down as he rushes forth to the fresh air."

It must be admitted that the gray fox, as compared with the red, is something of a sneak. They are both four-footed Jesuits, to be sure, but the latter is stouter, and besides has a family name—an ancestral glory to sustain! He is the Don Quixote of the foxes, and therefore we can well understand his hen-roost chivalry, not to speak of his barn-yard heroics!

Though we admit him to be great, we cannot help recognising the gray fox as the special embodiment of all the lower cunning of the race. We are most familiar with him in the south, and feel a sort of local jealousy for his fame and character. We flatter ourselves that he can afford to be guilty of a few peccadilos, since they are contrasted by such extraordinary attributes.

Let anybody read the subjoined anecdote, by the editors of the "Quadrupeds," and say afterwards, if he can, that the gray fox is not an extraordinary animal:—

"On a cold, drizzly, sleety, rainy day, while travelling in Carolina, we observed a gray fox in a field of broom-grass, coursing against the wind, and hunting in the manner of the pointer dog. We stopped to witness his manœuvres; suddenly he stood still, and squatted low on his haunches; a moment after he proceeded on once more, but with slow and cautious

steps; at times his nose was raised higher in the air, moving about from side to side. At length he seemed to be sure of his game, and went straight forward, although very slowly, at times crawling on the earth; he was occasionally hidden by the grass, so that we could not see him very distinctly; however, at length we observed him make a dead halt. There was no twisting or horizontal movement of the tail, like that made by the common house-cat when ready to make a spring, but his tail seemed resting on the side, whilst his ears were drawn back and his head raised only a few inches from the earth.

"He remained in this attitude nearly half a minute, and then made a sudden pounce upon his prey; at the same instant the whirring of the distracted covey was heard, as the affrighted birds took wing; two or three sharp screams succeeded, and the successful prowler immediately passed out of the field with an unfortunate partridge in his mouth, evidently with the intention of seeking a more retired spot to make a dainty meal.

"We had a gun with us, and he passed within long gun-shot of us. But we did not wound or destroy him. He had enabled us, for the first time, to bear witness that he is not only a dog, but a good pointer into the bargain; he had obeyed an impulse of nature, and obtained a meal in the manner in which it was intended by the wise Creator that he should be supplied."

This anecdote is very curious and interesting for several reasons. In the first place, it exhibits the fox in a new character of higher intelligence than he has credit for possessing; and in the next, it goes far towards confirming the old Spanish tradition with regard to the pointer dog. This represents the pointer as a made variety, and not an original race.

It is said that a Spanish monk first observed, in the wild dog of Andalusia, the trick of pausing before the spring upon its prey. As this pause was longer than in any other animal, the idea was at once suggested, that, by training, this habit might be made useful. He accordingly tamed a number of these dogs, and, finding them somewhat deficient in size, docility, and scent, crossed them upon the nobler species of the hound; and hence the pointer was derived.

I have always been inclined to regard this story as suggestive of the true origin of the pointer, and think it most likely that the wild dog mentioned was a transition species between the wolf-hound and fox. But apart from these conjectures, this incident illustrates, from an entirely new point of view, the predatory habits of the species.

In the older states of America, as all other game has been nearly exterminated, foxes seem only to have become more abundant, more sagacious, and more popular.

This animal seems to have been able to take care of itself, when all others have vanished before the exterminating tread of human progress. The game-laws protect the red fox in England to an uncertain degree; but the gray fox protects itself here without the aid of game-laws, and seems, in many districts, to defy all our efforts to exterminate it; while its sagacity, dexterity, and cunning, seem only to have been increased by the difficulties and dangers of its environment.

Fox-hunting in the middle and southern states is quite as much a subject of enthusiasm as it has been in England, although it is neither so expensive nor so technical with us. We are fox-hunters after a rude and untechnical manner; and although we do not ride in white tops and corduroys, yet we ride to the purpose; and through the rude and break-neck exigencies of thicket, forest, fallen trees, precipitous hills, rough rocks, precipices, and quaggy swamps, we are still the eager and staunch hunters of a game as staunch. Our horses, doubly trained in the deer and fox-hunt, are more wiry and active than the English hunters, although they may not be so alert in passing over open ground, or so well trained in leaping over hedges and ditches. And finally, as for dogs, their genealogies have been quite scrupulously preserved in the old states. Even at this day, we frequently find the Shaksperian ideal of the dog still carefully maintained :—

"My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew,
Crook-knee'd and dew-lapped, like Thessalian bulls
Slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth-like bells."

From Maryland to Florida, and farther west, through Kentucky and Alabama to Mississippi and Louisiana, fox-hunting, next to deer-hunting, is the favourite amusement of sportsmen, and the chase of that animal may in fact be regarded exclusively as a southern sport in the United States, as the fox is never followed on horseback in the north, where the rocky and precipitous character of the surface in many districts prevents the best riders from attempting it; whilst in others, our sturdy, independent farmers, would not like to see a dozen or more horsemen leaping through fences, and, with break-neck speed, galloping through the wheat-fields or other crops. Besides, the red fox, which is more generally found in the northern states than the gray species, runs so far before the dogs that he is seldom seen, although the huntsmen keep up with the pack, and, after a chase of ten miles, during which he may not have been once observed, he perhaps takes refuge in some deep fissure of a rock, or in an impenetrable burrow, which of course ends the sport, more to the satisfaction of the fox than his pursuers.

In the southern states, on the contrary, the ground is, in many cases, favourable to this amusement, and

the planter sustains but little injury from the passing hunt, as the gray fox usually courses through woods or worn-out old fields, keeping on high dry ground, and seldom, during the chase, running across a cultivated plantation.

In fox-hunting, it is well known that the horse usually becomes as much excited as his rider; and, at the cry of the hounds, I have known an old steed which had been turned loose in the woods to pick up a subsistence, prick up his ears, and in an instant start off full gallop, until he overtook the pack, keeping in the run until the chase was ended.

In the older southern states, the modes of hunting the gray fox are much alike. To the sound of winding horns, the neighbouring gentry collect at an appointed place, each accompanied by his favourite dogs, and usually a negro driver to manage them, and keep them from starting deer. Mounted on fine horses, accustomed to the sport, they send in the hounds and await the start, chatting in a group, collected in some by-road, or some high spot of open ground, from which they can hear every sound borne upon the breeze. Thickets on the edges of plantations, briar patches, and deserted fields covered with bloom-grass, are places where the fox is most likely to have his bed. The trail he has left behind him during his nocturnal rambles being struck, the hounds are encouraged by the voices of their drivers to as great speed as the devious course it leads them will

permit. Now they scent the trail the fox has left along the field when in search of partridges, meadow-larks, rabbits, or field-mice; presently they trace his footsteps to some large log, from whence he has jumped on to a worm-fence, and, after walking a little way on it, leaped a ditch and skulked towards the borders of a marsh. Through all his crooked ways the sagacious hounds unravel his trail, until he is suddenly roused, perchance from a dreamy vision of fat hens, geese, or turkeys, and, with a general cry, the whole pack, led on by the staunchest and best dogs, open-mouthed and eager, join the chase. The startled fox makes two or three rapid doublings, and then suddenly flies to a cover, perhaps a quarter of a mile off, and sometimes thus puts the hounds off the scent for a few minutes, as, when cool and at first starting, his scent is not so strong as that of the red fox.

After the chase has continued for a quarter of an hour or so, and the animal is somewhat heated, his track is followed with greater ease and quickness, and the scene becomes animating and exciting. Now the hunters dash into the chase, and, with wild, eager yells of excitement, they spur after the roaring pack, and plunge at headlong speed through the difficulties of the ground.

When the woods are free from underbrush, which is often the case in Virginia and the Carolinas, the grass and bushes being burnt almost annually, many

of the sportsmen keep up with the dogs, and the fox is frequently in sight. He now resorts to some of the manœuvres for which he is famous. He plunges into a thicket, doubles, runs into the water, leaps on to a log, or perhaps gets upon a worm-fence and runs along the top of it for a hundred yards, leaping from it with a desperate bound, and continuing his flight in the vain hope of escape. At length he becomes fatigued: he once more drives into the closest thickets, where he doubles hurriedly: he hears and even sees the dogs upon him, and, as a last resort, climbs a small tree. The hounds and hunters are almost instantly at the foot of it, and, while the former are barking fiercely at the terrified animal, the latter usually determine to give him another chance for his life. The dogs are taken off to a little distance, and the fox is forced to leap to the ground by reaching him with a long pole, or throwing a billet of wood at him. He is allowed a quarter of an hour before the hounds are permitted to pursue him; but he is now less able to escape than before; he has become stiff and chill, is soon overtaken, and falls an easy prey, turning, however, upon his pursuers, with a fierce despair, and snapping at them indomitably, game to the last.

The extraordinary cunning and sagacity of the gray fox is so much the theme of southern hunters, that we might collect quite a volume of well-authenticated stories of its feats.

Admitting all that the champions of the red fox can desire, the gray fox must be acknowledged to be remarkable for its intelligence. It frequently climbs trees, particularly in the summer time, but its favourite resort is to holes. Indeed, from what I remember of the gray fox, I should say emphatically that it was a burrower; for, in limestone regions, such as Kentucky, Tennessee, &c., where holes in the ground are abundant, the fellow only condescends to run for recreation, and takes to a hole as soon as he becomes blown.

An incident occurred in my own experience, and in the southern part of Kentucky, illustrating the astonishing sagacity of this fox. I was enthusiastically addicted to fox-hunting, and kept a fine pack of hounds. Several young men of the neighbourhood kept a pack of dogs also, and we used very frequently to meet, and join in the chase with all our forces.

There was a certain briary old field of great extent, near the middle of which we could, on any morning of the year, start a gray fox. After a chase of an hour or so, just enough to blow the dogs and horses well, we invariably lost the fox at the same spot, the fence corner of a large plantation, which opened into a heavy forest on one side of this old field. The frequency and certainty of this event became the standing joke of the country. Fox-hunters from other neighbourhoods would bring their

pack for miles, to have a run out of this mysterious fox, in the hope of clearing up the mystery. But no. They were all baffled alike. We often examined the ground critically, to find out, if possible, the mode of escape, but could discover nothing that in any way accounted for it, or suggested any theory in regard to it. That it did not fly, was very sure; that it must escape along the fence in some way, was equally so. My first idea was, that the animal, as is very common, had climbed upon the top rail of the fence, and walked along it to such a distance before leaping off, that the dogs were entirely thrown out. I accordingly followed the fence with the whole pack about me, clear round the plantation, but without striking the trail again, or making any discovery.

The affair now became quite serious. The reputation of our hounds was suffering; and besides, I found they were really losing confidence in themselves, and would not run with half the stanch eagerness which had before characterized them. The joke of being regularly baffled had been so often repeated, that they now came to consider it a settled thing that they were never to take another fox again, and were disposed to give up in despair. Some of the neighbours had grown superstitious about it, and vowed that this must be a weir-fox, who could make himself invisible when he pleased.

At last I determined to watch at the fence-corner, and see what became of the fox. Within about the

usual time, we heard him heading towards the mysterious corner, as the voices of the pack clearly indicated. I almost held my breath in my concealment, while I watched for the appearance of this extraordinary creature. In a little while the fox made his appearance, coming on at quite a leisurely pace, a little in advance of the pack. When he reached the corner, he climbed in a most unhurried and deliberate way to the top rail of the fence, and then walked along it, balancing himself as carefully as a rope-dancer. He proceeded down the side of the fence next to the forest in which I was concealed.

I followed cautiously, so as just to keep him in view. Before he had thus proceeded more than two hundred yards, the hounds came up to the corner, and he very deliberately paused and looked back for a moment, then he hurried on along the fence some paces farther; and when he came opposite a dead, but leaning tree, which stood inside the fence, some twelve or sixteen feet distant, he stooped, made a high and long bound to a knot upon the side of its trunk, up which he ran, and entered a hollow in the top where it had been broken off, nearly thirty feet from the ground, in some storm. I respected the astuteness of the trick too much to betray its author, since I was now personally satisfied; and he continued for a long time, while I kept his secret, to be the wonder and the topic of neighbouring fox-hunters, until at last one of them happened to take

the same idea into his head, and found out the mystery. He avenged himself by cutting down the tree and capturing the smart fox.

The tree stood at such a distance from the fence, that no one of us, who had examined the ground, ever dreamed of the possibility that the fox would leap to it; it seemed a physical impossibility; but practice and the convenient knot had enabled cunning Reynard to overcome it with assured ease. I quote an incident from the "Quadrupeds of America" of nearly the same class:—

"Shortly after the railroad from Charleston to Hamburg, South Carolina, had been constructed, the rails for a portion of the distance having been laid upon timbers at a considerable height from the ground, supported by strong posts, we observed a fox which was hard pressed by a pack of hounds, mounting the rails, upon which he ran several hundred yards; the dogs were unable to pursue him, and thus he crossed a deep cypress swamp, over which the railroad was in this singular manner carried, and made his escape on the opposite side."

The late Benjamin C. Yancy, Esq., an eminent lawyer, who in his youth was very fond of fox-hunting, related the following:—"A fox had been pursued, near his residence in Edgefield, several times, but the hounds always lost the track at a place where there was a foot-path leading down a steep hill. He therefore determined to conceal himself near the

declivity the next time the fox was started, in order to discover his mode of baffling the dogs at this place. The animal was accordingly put up and chased, and at first led the hounds through many thickets and ponds in the woods, but at length came running over the brow of the hill along the path, and stopped suddenly and spread himself out flat and motionless on the ground. The hounds came down the hill in pursuit at a dashing pace, and the whole pack passed, and did not stop until they were at the bottom of the hill. As soon as the immediate danger was over, the fox, casting a furtive glance around him, started up, and ran of at his greatest speed."

I knew an instance much resembling the last given; but this was a red fox. It was in the remarkable bluffs of the Kentucky river:—

"The fox had always been lost at the edge of one of these abrupt cliffs which faced the river. The place had often been examined by the hunters, but as the descent was nearly sheer perpendicular for several hundred feet, it had only to be looked over to convince the beholder that the fox must have wings to leap down it in safety. At last a hunter determined to watch the fox, and accordingly lay in wait. He saw the creature come to the edge of the bluff and look down. Ten feet below there was a break in the perpendicular line, which formed a sort of step nearly a foot in width. The movement by which he let himself down to this was something

between a leap and a slide, but it nevertheless landed him safe on the shelf; and then it appeared that this was the mouth of a wide fissure in the rock. The most curious part of this story is, that the hunter discovered another and easy entrance to the cave from the level ground above. This the fox never used when the hounds were on his trail, as the more perilous entrance from the front cut short the scent, and prevented the discovery of his retreat. He could only get down that way, and came out by the other opening from the level.

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE TEXAN HUNTRESS.

My dissertation of the last chapter upon the Fox and Fox-hunting, though strictly germane to the general theme, has caused me in some measure to lose sight of the individuality of the hunter in one of his favourite sports. Though I have turned aside, through many pages, to present some fine examplars of the character, I must now resume the thread of personal narrative in which I commenced, to recount something of my own experiences.

The rude and hardy sports in which my boyhood, youth, and opening manhood had been spent with

such devotion, had yet not been sufficiently engrossing to divert or turn me altogether from some misanthropical feelings, and I now longed for that excitement which the unregenerate human soul seems to seek naturally in war with its fellow-men.

I looked around upon the world for scenes and circumstances fitted to the gratification of such a humour. Texas at once promised the arena I desired—the vicious, the desperate, the social and civil outlaws of all the world, had gathered there.

Delightful fraternity!—they were fighting among themselves, fighting with the Mexicans, fighting with the Indians; and for recreation—to keep their hands in—were battling with the wild beasts. Charming existence! how I yearned to participate in its pleasures. I severed the few remaining ties, and started for this El Dorado of the lawless.

My friends saw me go, I believe, with some sense of relief. I had been guilty of no overt outrage against the laws of society, but I was impatient of its restraints, and they might therefore not unreasonably fear that its laws might not always command my respect. I found myself in just the element I longed for in this country. I met with men capable of all I dared to do—as hard and reckless as could be desired. I felt at home and at ease with such men —we understood each other! We carried our lives in our hands; or, what is in other words the same thing—our weapons.

It added to my relish of the sense of being, the consciousness that I might get myself shot at any moment. It was a novel sensation, having one's life so entirely at stake, or at least holding it in such complete dependence upon one's prompt right arm.

But the life in the cities and settlements was a mere foretaste. I must go to the frontier to meet the dusky chivalry of the mountains on the "Debateable Ground" of the plains. What with the open struggle with the wild Indian warrior, and guarding against the secret and murderous treachery of the Mexican, I expected to find employment enough, and glut my longings for excitement with the tumult of strange perils!

The incidents I am about to give are some of them familiar to leading men of Texas, though they have never been related in print. On my way out I had stopped to visit at the house of a friend, who was a planter, living high up on the Brazos River. Our time was principally occupied in hunting. As I had just arrived in the country, the abundant sport afforded by the numbers and variety of the game, with which it might be said literally to swarm, afforded unfailing diversion, and kept me in a continual state of excitement. I was on my horse the greater part of the time.

Though not a raw woodsman, so far as making my way through the heavy forests of the West was concerned, yet finding myself for the first time upon the

vast and unaccustomed expanse of the southern prairies, I was for a long time surprised that though excessively reckless, I should be here much perplexed, and even timid, in attempting to find my way.

The landmarks are so different, as well as the modes of using them, from those to which I had been accustomed, that I was frequently confused on finding myself left in the vicissitudes of the hunt, alone amidst the illimitable solitudes, with no experienced eye to see for me the course, where all was trackless.

When I thus got "*turned round*," as it is there called, and the consciousness that I had lost my course would drive the blood to my heart: the startled sense of solitude is difficult to describe. A thousand stories of bloody deaths under the reeking scalping-knife of savage hordes, met in the wide wilderness of plains; of confused circlings day by day, always bringing the victim back to his own trail, until the lingering death of starvation relieved the bewilderment; of wolves with hungry yells pursuing the uncertain flight which has betrayed to their ferocious instinct a sure prey; of the wild, vague, and unutterable horror of lonely unrecorded death in a thousand forms, until the mad impulse was to strike spurs into my horse and plunge blindly on amidst them all.

This singular sensation gradually loses its intensity, when, by a series of happy accidents, rather than

instincts, we gain more confidence, and it requires a less violent struggle to recall ourselves to calmness and the cool consideration of the position in which we are thrown.

But let there be as many lessons as can well be crowded into a year or two of such wild experiences, yet he is a man of very strong nerve who can, even then, draw up his horse, after a heated chase of buffalo, deer, wolf, or bear, and not feel much of this appalled startle when, the slaughter over, he looks around with aching eyes for the first time to see where he is. It is but for an instant that this feeling affects the experienced hunter. His hardy courage speedily resumes its sway; the carcass is slung upon his horse, and he turns his head towards the nearest high land to look how the country lies. If he recognises no familiar landmarks, and he sees that he is out of his range, he then takes his course by the direction of the prevailing winds, the moss upon the trees, the position of the sun, the course of the streams or of the buffalo trails, by the flight of birds, or such other telegraphic characters as he has learned to read.

But he has nevertheless experienced, however briefly, this vague feeling of terror and dread to which we have alluded, and no one but an old trapper, whose whole life has been spent among the mountains, ever entirely loses this sensation on realizing that he is lost in these mighty solitudes; be-

cause, in truth, he is never lost. He can live wherever a snail, a lizard, or a raven can live, and he cares little if he never sees the face of man for a year or two; in that time he is sure to come out somewhere, even if it be on the Pacific coast.

But to our story. The day's hunt had been an unusually exciting one. We hunted deer after the following fashion. These animals feed principally upon the open prairie, but about eleven o'clock A.M. they may be seen in long lines sauntering towards the nearest wood, which usually, throughout Texas, grows upon the margin of the small lakes or banks of streams.

They are now going to water, and repose in the shade until three or four o'clock in the afternoon, when they come out to feed again. The deer of the prairies is a very swift variety, with smaller antlers than the common buck of our forests bear. We stationed ourselves some half a mile distant in the prairie on fleet horses, some, who were most skilled, with the common "lasso" of the country, and others with our holster pistols, as in my own case. A negro "driver," as he is called, was then sent in with dogs on the opposite side of the wood to drive the deer out upon the plain; for, contrary to the usage of the common deer, this creature of the plains makes always for open ground directly when pursued, and we awaiting their exit chased them by sight on our horses. We had but little time to wait, for within twenty

minutes out burst a numerous herd. It was a splendid sight as they came plunging into the long grass and sunshine, out from the dark shadows suddenly, with their white throats, their antlers thrown back, and ears laid sharp behind to hearken to the pursuing cry of the hound. It is one of the most exciting scenes I know in the sports of our country.

We reined up our horses for the start; bending forward with eager eye and bounding pulse to wait the instant when they should have passed us on their way into the illimitable plain upon which they trust to their feet for safety. But though those tiny hoofs be fleet enough to leave the red wolf far behind, or dart beyond the agile panther's leap, yet our good steeds, that champ and plunge impatiently, are far more fleet than they. Now they go bounding by with long high leaps over the tall embarrassing grass. Now, too, with a wild shout of pent-up excitement, we are off on the chase, each man selecting his special prey. There is little use for the whip and spur in this hunt, for when a horse has once tasted its fierce and headlong pleasures, he needs no other stimulant after. They, like their riders, become furious with the excitement, and sometimes will bite the poor animal when they come up with it after a long chase.

The broad white tails of the deer produce a droll effect as they rise and fall along the surface of the grass, and serve as a sort of fluttering beacon to the eye in the early part of the run; for when they, at

first sight of you, fairly start, in their frightened speed they leave horse and rider far enough behind; but this does not last long; they are very fat at the harvest season, and do not hold out long at this rate. After a time they begin to flag from the heat and the dragging weight of the grass, which is now nearly as high as their backs. We gradually close upon them, and the herd begins to break up, scattering in all directions. Your eye has become fixed upon a particular one, a noble buck, whose powerful form has attracted you. Your horse has caught the same object, and divines you well as he turns his head to follow it, without regard to the course taken by the rest.

Now the excitement reaches its highest pitch; and as you find yourself farther separated from the other sounds of the chase, your own individual passions become more and more intensified upon the immediate object before you, and you rush on you know not whither. My game on this day proved to be much more long-winded and powerful than usual, and I had as the consequence, a tremendous race of it before I began to gain very rapidly upon its flight. At length the buck began to make leaps a little less long and high, and my horse, by this time thoroughly heated in the run, to snort with eagerness as he increased his speed. I closed rapidly with the quarry, and loosened my holsters for the shot which was to end the scene. Now my horse, with ears laid back, closes

up alongside, and with haste the pistol is snatched from the holster. With all its desperate speed I almost touched the hair with the muzzle before I fired — between the shoulders — and it is down! tumbling, in the impulse of its flight, forward, with broken neck bent beneath the body.

It is over, and I looked around for the first time to see where I was, or what was in sight. Gradually the overwhelming realization of the vastness came upon me, and then the consciousness that I had missed all trace of my way. I had lost all idea of course, distance, or time during the chase, and now was completely "turned round." I immediately felt the full dangers of my situation. I knew the direction in which we had started, but knew too, as well, that from the numerous turns the chase had taken, that I could no more tell which way to start back than if I had been blind.

I had imprudently come out without a pocket compass, and was a young woodsman lost upon strange plains. I did not know enough of the geography of the country to render what knowledge I had of natural signs of any avail to me here. I was, in a word, sufficiently panic-struck to act more like the inexperienced person that I was, than with the self-possession these circumstances so much required. My heart beat loud and fast as I wheeled my horse, and with a feeling of recklessness, spurred him into one of the narrow openings, without stopping one

moment to consider whither it should lead me. The poor deer I left upon the spot where it fell, for I was too much startled to think of dissecting it now; since, of all the terrible fates that could ever befall a human being, this of being lost in such a country had always been most formidable to me.

I had known of so many instances of terrible suffering and dreary death from such a cause, at this early time—when even individual settlements were sometimes eighty or a hundred miles apart in the direction of Galveston, and none in the opposite direction for thousands of miles—that now the chill revulsion seemed first like present annihilation, and then like such remote and undefined suffering as was far more formidable; so I urged on vaguely, hoping nothing, but simply asking for action to distract, and a crisis to end the suspense.

My horse apparently sympathized with my terror and despair, for he rushed on with a frightened speed, which at any other time would have been frightful, but now was only congenial. It was not long before I gained the open plain, upon which there was nothing but grass and horizon, but which appeared to me the wide end of all things.

I fired my other pistol in the air, in the hope that some of the party of hunters might hear it: then I paused to listen. My frightened and impatient horse would chafe and plunge for a moment, and again, as if divining why I paused, would be still as death;

and now, with pricked ears, pointed stiffly here and there, seem listening round him for a sound; and then would snuff the breeze with his wide, eager nostrils, and with an impulse, headlong and impatient as my own, bound onward.

I had ridden on for several hours, the country at each moment becoming still more strange. There were no objects in which I could detect the slightest degree of familiarity; my horse was beginning to fail, and dreading lest he would give out beneath me, I reined him up. This would, indeed, be a fate too terrible to contemplate—being left on foot in the midst of these great plains! I got down and stroked his panting sides, and walked with him for an hour, until he seemed to be regaining his strength somewhat, for the morning's work had been tremendous, as I, in my unrecking despair, had kept him urged to nearly the top of his speed during this foolish ride. Fortunately, he was one of those game and indomitable horses formed by crossing the mustang, or wild horse of the prairies, upon the larger-boned Northern horse, or he could never have survived such a run.

I had supposed that my only chance of escape lay in keeping one direction, for, that circling commenced, each turn made lessened the chances. But now that I came to reason somewhat coolly about my position, it became apparent to me, that in this time I had, in pursuing this straight line, passed over more than treble the possible distance to the planta-

tion of my friend, and that, of course, I must therefore either have taken the wrong direction, or have passed it without observing. Then commenced that fatal series of doubts, fears, surmises, trials, in this and that direction, which is usually the indication of syncope in this disease of getting lost. Each failure only bewilders you the more. But, nevertheless, some change had become necessary. I might be every moment going away from the reach of help—getting deeper and deeper into the trackless waste! But which way shall I turn? I now remembered, for the first time, that I had failed to trust anything to my horse in choosing my direction.

If I had done so in the first place, the chances were that the extraordinary instinct possessed by many of these animals would have carried me right. I have, in frequent instances, found this instinct infallible, especially when the animal was crossed upon the Arab blood, as the mustang is. That noble race, which bore the earliest children of Ham in the chase across the shifting deserts, inherits all the strange instincts, with regard to courses and distances, which the wild and perilous uses of their hunter-lords developed in them.

I stopped my horse, and dropping the reins upon his back, urged him slightly with my spurs. When he found himself free, he shook his head to realize it, and then, stopping, turned his gaze around and around him several times; but yet he seemed to be

bewildered, and only moved hesitatingly, first in this direction and then in that. If he had taken his course at once, I should have felt some hope; but my heart sank in me as I saw from his manner that he felt what was expected of him, but had become confused. Had he taken any particular direction, and pursued it steadily with accelerated speed, I should have been entirely secure, because then I would have been impressed that he knew he was right, and could ultimately bear us through. His hesitation, however, convinced me that I was as utterly lost as ever rudderless ship without a compass was upon a shoreless sea; but yet I felt, too, that I had better trust to him than to myself.

He was evidently as afraid of being trusted as I to trust. However, after a pause of a few moments, he moved on, turning back nearly in the direction we had come. At first I was pleased with this selection, as it seemed to indicate the possible truth of my own surmise, that I had started nearly right, but had passed the plantation. This poor consolation, however, did not outlive the approach of night, which came in heavy shadows, portending a storm, such as thunders and rages along these southern plains occasionally. My miserable horse was now nearly exhausted, and staggered as he dragged his limbs heavily through the high grass. We were still in the prairie, with nothing around us but the great ocean of grass, which was beginning to toss and

sway with the advance winds of the coming tornado.

The black clouds came rolling up out of the south-east, and already I felt the cold breath that drove it on dash with heavy chill against my face. The rush and roar that followed left me no time for thought. In a moment horse and man were prostrate, helpless on the plain.

Such crashes!—such tremendous thunder-claps!—such sheeting the horizon with swift piercing blazes!—such floods of rain, that but seemed a better medium to transmit the mighty clangour! Such an image of sublime anarchy never before came to overwhelm an already desperate, wearied, and starving wanderer. I clutched at the strong rooted grass, and knew not, in the horrid tumult, that my horse had fallen upon my leg.

I was so stunned that I did not feel the pain. I tried to look up to understand the awful clamour. My horse at last, as terror-stricken as myself, burst forth, while he lay writhing upon my crushed leg, into a wild and strangely harrowing cry, peculiar to these animals when overcome by panic, and which now rose a shriek of agony into the tempest. I had never heard it before, and could not know its source; and the sudden coming of this shrill and unimaginable cry so close to my head, had an effect of the supernatural so absolutely appalling, that I fainted, and remember nothing more until the steady rays of

the early sunlight upon my eyes woke me to a sense of pain, weakness, and astonishment, amounting almost to fright; for stooping over me was one of the most unexpectedly strange figures that it had ever been my fortune to encounter.

"He's coming-to—the poor boy!"

This was spoken in a tone that startled me for some reason—I did not know what—entirely apart from the circumstances, and the unexpectedness of hearing a human voice at all, amidst such scenes. I looked up. What a face! Storm-seamed and bronzed though it was, it was clearly a woman's face that leaned over and looked kindly down upon me from beneath a sort of half cap and half hood of fawn's skin, with the spotted hair turned out.

"You are not wanting a wet bed to make you grow, my green youngster! What in the name of wonder brought you here, child?"

The sort of half-grim pleasantry with which this was spoken, as I opened my eyes fully upon her, relieved in some degree my startled feeling of apprehension, and I faltered out feebly, with an attempt at cleverness—

"I suppose I was blown here, or fell from the clouds!" She assisted me to a sitting posture with her strong hand.

"Nonsense! nonsense, boy! your own foolish hastiness brought you here. Get up! Ah, I see you cannot rise yet. But you are hungry, perhaps? I'll

give you a slice of as fine a buck as ever was killed, and the taste of which one would think you ought to know."

She drew forward a small wallet of dressed skin that was slung behind her singular costume of the same material, and took from it some pieces of roasted venison, with which she presented me. As I clutched them with a half-famishing eagerness, a low, quiet laugh from this personage caused me to look up at her again with a droll feeling of curiosity, which even excessive hunger could not repress.

"Taste it, boy, taste it! He, he, he!—you ought to know that meat!" and she stooped to pick a rifle from the wet grass; and while she examined carefully the neat lock, I could see her whole figure fully as I ate. The form was unmistakeably that of a genuine woman. The figure, about five feet seven, had nothing of Amazonian stoutness at all apparent, although the manner in which the rifle was held and handled, would naturally lead one to suppose that those limbs must be very compact indeed. The general outline, although obscured by the rude drapery, gave you the idea of that swift tenacity which round small bone and strong thews express in the young Indian runner of the north, without destroying a sort of "formidable grace" in its flexible natural movement.

It was surprising to think that she should be a woman of our own race. The features were plain,

and here the lines were a little sharp, though not unmatronly altogether. There was an expression of care, not faded, but eager, anxious, longing. The eye seemed so calm and frank, quick, open, large, and blue, that you could never have conceived the finely arched eye-brow as darkening of itself, but simply as drawn down by the possible contracting of the mouth below. In a word, with her tanned, self-possessed face, her hair slightly tinged with gray, her half hunter and half Indian costume, her concise language, her sudden appearance, she was to me the most extraordinary human being I had yet met with. I was too hungry to philosophize or speculate, so there was nothing left me to do but live in the exhausted present, and wait for the future to enlighten me concerning her.

She leaned the gun, re-covering the lock with a buck's-skin guard, carefully against my saddle, which I observed upon the grass, and seeming to be satisfied from her inspection that the tube was all right and the cap now entirely dry, she walked towards my horse, merely saying, "Sleep again, boy, and you will be ready!" The curt injunction seemed almost unnecessary, for the unconquerable drowsiness which follows eating, after long hunger and excessive fatigue and excitement, was already upon me; and the last I saw of her she was standing by the side of my horse with caressing words and gestures as he nibbled feebly at the grass amidst which he stood,

with an uncertain sort of air, as if he would just as soon lay down again, or rather fall down, as not!

When I awoke again, the sun was getting low, and its shadows even fell over the damp bed upon which I had fallen. I raised myself to a sitting posture with a vigour apparently renewed, as I felt for the moment surprised and mystified enough by what had been occurring. It all seemed like a dream. It could not be real! There was a vague image of a strange woman with a rifle in her hand, struggling through my brain, and I tried to remember her words, and her plain, remarkable face, with the fawn-skin hood, and her hardy-looking figure, with its anomalous dress of buck-skin; but it all seemed too unreal, and I rose with a sort of smiling consciousness that I had been dreaming; because there was my noble gray standing the usual distance off in the deep grass, and browsing as if he expected a long day's work, and was laying in the necessary supply of provender therefore.

To be sure, the grass seemed strangely levelled and twirled about, and it was odd what a number of twigs and limbs of trees lay strewed around, considering there was nothing like a tree in sight; but yet I could make nothing out of it. How came my saddle off? How came Gray to look so comfortable? How came I so lame in my left leg that I could not step more than half an inch at a time after I got up, and

realized the extent and dreariness of the devastation in the midst of which I stood?

What a scene of desolation for a dreaming man to awake to! I had risen from a blanket! It seemed as if I must have gone to sleep quite considerately! There were evidences about me of my having partaken of food—the proof was in the vigour that I felt in spite of my lameness; and then the whole terrible scene of the storm came back to me as I brushed my forehead impetuously with my hand. I turned my head, and there stood the strange figure of my supposed dream, leaning on her rifle, within ten feet of me, chuckling inwardly at my bewilderment, with that same cool smile!

"Young man, are you ready now?" she asked, suddenly. I was still somewhat bewildered, and answered, "Ready for what?"

"To go with me!" was the abrupt reply.

"But go where? What would you have me to do? Who are you? Are you man or woman?"

"What is that to you, childish boy? Your questions are foolish. I have saved your life, and wish to preserve it farther; you can never get out of this wilderness in your present condition. I will take you home with me until you are recovered sufficiently."

"But have you a home?" I said, pertinaciously.

"Am I a wild beast?" she answered, taking off the strange head-dress, and showing a pure white brow, the feminine lines of which contrasted curiously

with the dark, seamed bronze beneath. She smiled, I thought a little proudly, as she replaced it, and advanced towards my horse for the purpose of equipping him, which was done with perfect dexterity. She then led him to my side.

"Now, boy, will you mount?"

"How can I? I can scarcely move."

"O, never mind! your leg is not broken. I can help you!"

So, without more ado, she lifted me into the saddle, with perfect ease to herself, but great agony to me. When once in the saddle, the pain subsided in a measure. She pointed me the course, and walking by my side, held my leg gently, so as to ease its position as much as possible. This considerate kindness had a most soothing effect upon me, and the simple act greatly alleviated my pain and restored me to confidence—singular as had been the circumstances of this rencontre. I was even moved to speak to her as to a human being; for in my disturbed state she had really appeared a doubtful sort of being. I was not over clear in my mind as to where she came from, nor over sure what to expect from her; but this little act convinced me that I must be in good hands at least, however unaccountable the use they were apparently put to might seem.

She appeared to comprehend the sort of dubiousness of feeling with which I had become possessed, and answered the question—

"How far is this home of yours?"

"O! it is not in a hole in the ground, in a hollow tree, or in a cave, as you will see!"

"Then how far is it to C——'s plantation?" I asked, naming that of my friend.

"You will find it far enough to need whole limbs to reach it."

After some further questions, met by the like vague replies, I asked abruptly, and with some petulance, "Why do you persist in calling me 'child,' 'boy,' and the like names?"

"Because you are a child!" and she looked up into my face with a quick glance that had an expression of sternness in it, above that compressed mouth, that I shall never forget.

"Mere boy as you are, you think you are a man!" I was a youth of twenty-one at the time, an age the least likely to be willing to renounce its claims to perfect manhood. But she added what it was impossible for me to gainsay: "You must have wiser and riper experience than those which caused a brave young man—no doubt!—to start like a madman across the plains, merely because he considered himself lost, without taking time to cut up the deer he had just shot, or to coolly examine his immediate neighbourhood—when, in that event, he might have seen me step forth, and relieve him from all trouble. You need to trust Nature more, and through her learn to trust yourself! You are old

enough and know enough to have found your way back to your friends, if you had stopped to think a moment. I saw you scurry off, and before I understood the cause, you were beyond the reach of any sound I could produce. I laughed, and pitied you, but found you this morning by accident."

"You are a strange person. What is the meaning of all these things you say to me?"

"Meaning, boy! That you children of civilization imagine yourselves educated when you have talked with books. You have only commenced the true life. Neither the physical nor spiritual are yet developed in you, although you may be what you call learned."

We were still conversing, when she turned her head abruptly, with the remark, "You will know more some time!" and, as at the moment a herd of deer, which had been lying down in the grass within range, sprang up from a low piece of the ground, her rifle was at her shoulder in an instant. A deer bounded into the air, and merely saying, as she turned off—"Wait for me!"—she proceeded with a hunting-knife, to give the finishing stroke to the wounded animal—reloading her rifle as she went.

"Well," said I, as I turned myself in my saddle, when she was out of ear-shot, "here is a free specimen—how strangely she talks—and yet how kindly she has treated me—if she does patronise! I half suspect she's right about the child!"

The deer was dissected in short order, and she returned to my side bearing the hams still enveloped in the hide, which had been stripped from the fore-parts, which are not much valued in a country where venison is so abundant. She slung her burden across my horse behind my seat, merely remarking as we moved on, "This is a fat saddle!"

"But is it possible that you hunt on foot always?"

"Yes; I prefer it!"

"How do you get your meat home?—not upon your shoulders, I hope."

"Yes—but why not, young man? My limbs are strong, my step is firm. I do not tire like the tottering creatures of civilization. I who breathe God's pure air have the will—why not the deed?"

This led us into another curious discussion, which was interrupted by her remarking dryly, "But look! there is our little home."

I had become so interested in our conversation, that I had not noticed what the direction was, or what were the peculiarities of the ground we were passing over. I now looked around me, and even if my vision had not been sharpened by observing a sort of cynical smile upon her face as she pronounced the last words, I think my own memory would have been sufficient to compel me to recognise the scene in which the deer had fallen, and from which, as it was now turning out, I had fled so ignominiously.

There was the very spot where I had left the

deer, and the bones of the refuse parts lay strewed around upon the dank and bloody grass. Some wolves, which had been squatting in the neighbourhood of their feast, made off as we approached. I looked in the direction in which the woman had pointed, but could perceive nothing like a house. She smiled at my puzzled gaze of inquiry into her face.

"You are back again, you see! I took off that deer's skin myself, and you ate some of its meat. The horse had more wit than the rider: you perceive he was coming direct!"

"Yes," said I dolorously, as we were passing on; "but where is the house of which you spoke?" for my bruised limb, the pain of which I had almost forgotten during the excitement of our conversation, was becoming most oppressive, now that something had been said of home and rest.

"Do you see that small mott?" said she, pointing with her rifle to a clump of large live oaks upon a bit of rising ground, some half a mile ahead, and near to what I now perceived, for the first time, to look like the heavy timbered bottom of a stream of some size.

"I see nothing but a mott!" said I, impatiently. "Where is the house?" Her look brightened as she stepped on more briskly by the side of my horse, who seemed to have scented some familiar odour on the breeze that quickened his step, for his ear was

now pricked forward, and his gait confident and elate.

"You shall see!" and she smiled. We soon reached the mott, and, passing beneath the long drapery of moss that descended from the limbs of the live-oak, we were at once in the dim cool twilight, which would have best become that religious atmosphere in which the old Druidical rites were performed. In the midst of this, and almost hidden by the drapery of the great tree above, I saw indistinctly the appearance of palisading, that seemed to be circular in form. Another moment she pushed aside the moss, and we were at the door. It was a round hut, the walls of which were composed of the small trunks of trees set perpendicularly in the ground, the interstices being filled with a sort of cement of moss and mud. The roof was thatched with bulrushes, and the door was a frame of hickory saplings stoutly interwoven. There was no sort of picketing about it, as is usual in the country, to the small as well as large ranchos.

It seemed as if the shelter of the moss-draped oaks had been deemed sufficient; and so, indeed, it appeared to be, for its appearance of entire security, like some wild nest of lonely birds, was what first struck me as I saw it. The door was closed, and it looked silent as death. She held up her arms to assist me to alight, and then taking down her venison, she gave the bridle of my horse a turn

around a limb of the sheltering oak, and assisted me toward the door. She called out in a low tone, "William!"

I heard a soft, unsteady tread respond to the call, and the door was opened. A pale man, with large head, bright gray eyes, broad shoulders, and small legs, made his appearance.

"What is the matter, Molly?" said he, with such a quiet look, as his eye fell upon me, that one would have supposed I was his eldest son, "Is the poor youth hurt that he leans upon you so?"

"Yes."

"Then bring him in, in God's name, and we will shelter him until his strength returns!" and she assisted me to the door, when he clutched me with a strength of gripe that astonished me, and nearly lifting me towards a low couch of dried moss, laid me upon it without asking a question. He adjusted my position with a sort of awkward care, and, when assured that I was comfortable, he went quietly to a rude ottoman, composed of dressed bear-skins with forked stakes and small saplings for supports, and seated himself, with the most benign expression of serenity, before a rude table covered with all sorts of odd implements; and taking up what appeared to be a microscope, commenced an attentive survey of some small object before him, which I could not distinguish. He had asked me no explanation, did not seem to be at all disturbed by my sudden appearance,

and had fallen back into what seemed a routine, just as if nothing had happened. This, though not very complimentary to my vanity, only served to rouse my curiosity, in spite of my sufferings.

"Molly will take care of you directly," he said, looking up; "she has gone to stake out your horse!" and he went on with his work. I thought of magii, necromancers, astrologers, alchemists, &c., all in a breath, as I stared at the strange, calm man, with the light from one small window, or port-hole rather, falling upon his table and his gray hairs!

The strange effect was not a little heightened by what surrounded this person. I had now, in the unbroken silence, sufficient leisure to observe these appliances, which were entirely inexplicable to me at the time. First, I noticed a small rude furnace in one corner, near to which were scattered about some small hammers, files, tongs, and other tools used in working iron and steel; while near the desk were some ten or a dozen small models carved from wood with great neatness, and having occasional springs, bolts, &c., of metal. Such a maze of wheels, cogs, cranks, balls, bolts, and all that sort of thing was there, that one could form no idea of their meaning, not even whether they all belonged to the same machine, or were the parts of one whole, waiting to be put together!

On knots and pegs, in crannies, and strewed in all sorts of confusion about the floor and on rude shelves,

were every conceivable variety of parts that appeared to have been formed for machinery of models or a model. These parts were principally of wood, as the metals seemed to have been used with every possible frugality, since they must, of course, have been very difficult to obtain and to transport in such a region. A few of the simplest of the common implements of carpentry were hung around the room or thrown about the floor. It seemed as if the tools and their creations had all been shaken in a bag together, and then whirled around the room to roll together, to fall or stick, where and as they might. It was certainly a droll-looking place, and there was one mysterious recess which was hung with skins, but which was, as it appeared to me, too small for a bed, and added not a little to my curiosity.

The woman now came in.

"He is bruised, William; what shall we do?"

The man looked up slightly.

"Did you bring in a deer, Molly?"

"Yes."

"Is it cold?"

"All but the hams."

"Then skin them, and wrap the warm parts of the skin around the bruised limb!"

"Yes, I know;" and she turned off, while he resumed his labour.

"Well," thought I, "this is a case! Here I am

about to be enveloped in a reeking deer-skin, warm from the carcass, by these strange nurses."

The woman came with the warm skin; and after some remonstrance on my part, the old man was roused from his labour to envelope my extremities in this novel poultice. I afterwards found that it was extensively used among the Indians, north and south, and have since learned that this first step towards the wet sheet and blanket, claimed to be invented by Priessnitz, is one of the oldest uses of our race, still practised with wonderful effect in China, Russia, Germany, &c., by the lower classes, and sometimes by the higher, as was the case once with Murat, when he was crushed almost into a jelly by the fall of his horse down a precipice.

He was enveloped by his wise physician in the hide of an ox, which was killed for the purpose, and, after a long sleep, recovered, with nearly all trace of his bruises gone. I was not aware at the time, more than vaguely, in what good and ancient company I lay in my novel envelope; all I could know about it was, that I went to sleep very soon, and awoke with the pain gone!

The old man released me, and leading me, entirely nude, outside the door, astounded me by dashing a bucket full of the coldest water upon my person, which was reeking with perspiration; and before I had fairly recovered from the effects of this, it was followed by another and another.

This primitive sort of treatment had a wonderful effect; and when I again dressed, I was like a new creature, so free did I feel from the distressing consequences of my fall. I found, in attempting to move about, that there was still some stiffness in my leg, but it was so slight as not to be a matter of much importance. The bruises were gone, and the circulation of the limb restored in a great measure, and that was certainly miracle enough for the present.

Though the acute pain had been entirely banished by this novel process, yet, of course, the entire restoration was slow. The muscles and tendons had been seriously strained and injured by the weight and struggles of my horse, but bathing the parts in cold water, as was directed by the old man, always soothed any painful return of inflammation.

There was a clear beautiful spring in the rear of the house, underneath the huge live-oaks composing the mott. Here I limped several times a day to apply the simple restorative. The little brook made its shining way through the high grass down the slope, and, at some periods of the day, glanced prettily in the sun from beneath the green tangles that drooped and met over it. The scene was very pleasant; for, seated on the mossy roots in the cool dense shade, I could just trace its glimmering way by glimpses through the heavy draping of moss which depended nearly to the ground. The stillness, mildly stirred by the faint ripple, was so lulling, that if one did not

sleep soon he was compelled to think, and in connected strains of thought too.

Here I sat and mused much; for, in spite of myself, there was something in this woman's talk that impressed me, and in the strange life and manners of this remarkable recluse that had aroused my curious sympathy. It had, moreover, become obvious to me that my kind host and hostess were something more than the ordinary dwellers in such wilds, and had some purpose they aimed at, very different from a mere subsistence on the products of the chase. "These people," thought I, "are clearly in earnest. Women do not run such risks for nothing, nor do men dedicate themselves with such singleness of purpose to what they merely expect selfish returns from. I must get at this idea—and get at it I will! These persons are evidently educated." For, silent and abruptly incommunicative as they had been since I came, I had heard enough to convince me of this much.

Such were my musings, when, after having been tenderly nursed for several days, I found myself equally puzzled, as at first, to understand what this old man was doing or expected to accomplish. He had made no explanations, and although uniformly kind, had taken no sort of notice of the various and ingenious hints by which I had endeavoured to get at what was his object. I had slyly tried to understand for myself the meaning of the models which

strewed the room, but could make nothing out of them all. Though my knowledge of mechanics was very slight, yet I had some idea of general principles, which ought to have been sufficient to give me at least a vague clue to the object attempted. I had given up in despair; and as I could not understand the meaning of the language in which they spoke to each other upon the subject of the mysterious machine, I determined to win upon the sympathies of one or the other in some way, and thus get at the secret. Accident favoured me.

My hostess had talked with me in the freest manner during the first exciting period after our meeting; but since I had become an inmate, her answers to my inquiry upon such subjects had all been abrupt and mystical to a degree which left me no wiser than before. The old man seldom left the house, even for exercise; but one morning, when I had almost entirely recovered, I was sitting in my accustomed place by the spring, when he came slowly walking towards me with the feeble gait of the partial paralytic, and, greatly to my surprise, bore my pistols, along with his own gun, in his hands.

"What can this mean?" thought I, rising hastily to meet him.

Giving the pistols into my hands, he merely said, with a quiet smile: "The Cherokee Indians are down, young man; and we may have to defend our little home!"

"Is it possible!" said I, starting with surprise. "The Cherokees! Where are they? How did you hear?"

"O, Molly keeps a good look-out! she found their trail about daybreak, and has since seen them. She has just got in. They are on her trail now, I suppose, for we expect them here soon!"

The blood rushed to my heart, and it beat very loud and fast. I had never met Indians of any sort as yet. Here at once was a stern novelty in the excitements that I had courted.

I had little time to understand the thing, for we now saw and felt the imminent necessity of hurrying towards the house before the approaching savages. I had to assist the old man, and the moment I got into motion, the blood rushed in a burning tide back to my head and face, and then every limb and fibre thrilled with a new sensation. Everything seemed confused around me for the moment. The trees spun, and the moss and grass were whirled together in a chaotic blending, most like that before the eyes of a drunken man, while the only objects that I saw with perfect and vivid distinctness were the tall forms of eight or ten warriors that had suddenly appeared in the distance, and were gliding rapidly across a small opening between the oaks, evidently with the view of getting between us and the house, and thus cutting us off from shelter. When I realized this it restored me to the full possession of all my faculties. The

distance we had to pass was short, to be sure, but then the old man was paralytic, and I was still somewhat lame.

I saw in one quick glance our great danger—that the savages were urging their utmost speed to intercept us. A sudden strength possessed me at once. My eye took in everything. The very undulations of the moss enabled me to track their course, when they quickly passed out of view behind it. I could now even hear the twigs crush beneath their feet—when feeling that our hope was a desperate one, I seized the old man in my arms, and forgetting my lameness, rushed with him towards the door of the house.

I reached it, and found it was closed for the moment. He still held on to his rifle, and as the door opened to admit us, he turned himself in my arms, and coolly presenting it, said in a low voice, "Stop!"

The word was not fully spoken, when the ring of several rifles from the wood was replied to by that of his own. He dropped heavily from my arms on his own door-sill. The Indians were upon us! I had stuck my pistols into my belt, and now I wheeled to face them, standing over the body. The clear ring of a rifle above my shoulder, and the staggering fall of one of the foremost warriors, showed me that "Molly" was on the watch. The Indians recoiled for a moment, for it was the chief of the party that fell beneath the shot, and then seeing only myself astride of the

body, they rushed on me with a yell as vengeful as it was infernal.

I saw the fierce eyes of "Molly" blazing behind me as she screamed—"Give it to the Cherokee dogs, my boy!" while she plied her ramrod desperately, reloading for another shot.

I stood at bay with that strange flushed feeling which always attends the consummation of despair. It was a wild and furious struggle for a moment. The firing of my pistols was almost instantly followed by the report of her rifle again; this caused the Indians to hesitate slightly, which gave us time to drag in the body of the dead or wounded man, we did not yet know which. They saw us about to escape, and made a rush to prevent the closing of the door. Several of them were throwing themselves against it together, and had nearly succeeded in the effort, but the frantic woman seemed endued with nearly supernatural strength, and with a single stroke felled the foremost with the butt of her rifle, while I held the door with all my excited strength. Though both of us were wounded, we succeeded in closing the bolt, while the Indians kept firing at the door, in the vain hope of hitting us through it. Hickory is a very tough wood, and the closely woven withs or poles of which it was composed were bullet-proof.

It was not, however, proof against hatchets, and instantly we heard the blows by which they were cutting their way through. We reloaded our wea-

pons in silence. The door was frailly hung, and could not stand such a general assault long; but when we were ready, she looked up with a smile that seemed very strange at such a time.

"I prepared for them long ago!" she said, in a low voice, as she punched out a bit of mud from between two of the pickets of the house, and then thrust her rifle through what I now saw was a shrewdly disguised port-hole, bearing directly upon the door. She fired, and a yell of agony from the outside followed. As she withdrew her rifle, I also fired my pistol through the port-hole into the midst of the flurried and astonished group which had gathered about a fallen warrior. Their discomfiture was now complete, and, with gestures of furious menace, I could see they commenced a retreat more rapid than the charge had been, and as little expected.

The woman, who now appeared to have grown wild with rage, quickly sent after them another shot from the doorway, which she had impetuously thrown open. She screamed her defiance, and shook her clenched hand at them like some crazed "Madge Wildfire," as they disappeared in yet greater confusion from her shot; and turning towards me with lips blue and compressed, until they were thin as wafers across her teeth, muttered faintly, "They have slain my husband!" and staggering towards the still insensible body, her flashing eyes suddenly grew dim, her face deadly pale, and dropping her rifle to the floor, she

fell upon the body, clutching it convulsively about the neck.

Now came the time for me to repay, in some measure at least, the kindness of this singular couple. They both lay stretched upon the floor insensible, and apparently dead. It was a horrid sight. For a moment I was stupified as I gazed upon them, but, recovering my presence of mind, I sprang first for some water, and dashed it into the faces of the motionless pair, and then, kneeling beside them, rubbed their hands and feet with all my strength. It was but a little time before I convinced myself that neither of them was yet dead. This relieved and encouraged me greatly, so that I urged my efforts to resuscitate them, and, after a few minutes more, commenced examining the old man's body, to find and stanch the wound.

I had seen no blood as yet, and therefore supposed it must, of course, bleed internally, and consequently be fatal. What was my hopeful surprise to find that it was apparently a graze-shot, as the ball had ploughed up the flesh along the hinder part of the neck, near the base of the skull; and as it was evidently not deep when I probed it with my finger, I came to the conclusion that the bone had been merely indented, not shattered, and that the spinal chord had been more paralyzed by the shock than seriously injured. Pleased by this discovery, I rapidly stanched the blood, which had been running

down inside the collar of his buckskin coat, and was, therefore, not visible.

The wound of the woman was bleeding profusely. I soon found that it consisted of an ugly flesh-wound in the right arm, which passed through into the breast, but whether into the chest or not I could only conjecture; but hoped for the best, as I saw it, too, bled externally and freely. I stanched the wounds as well as my poor skill in surgery would admit. She gradually recovered from the swoon, and, half rising, stared vaguely about her for an instant; but her first words were—

"Is he alive?" This was spoken in a suffocating voice, while her lips trembled.

"He still lives, and, I hope, is not mortally hurt."

"God be thanked!" she said solemnly, and with a start she sprang to her feet. "You are hurt, young man; I see blood upon you!"

I had been too much excited to think of my own wound, although I now felt that the pain had been considerable: however, it proved to be, upon examination, but slight, and gave me but little trouble afterwards. It was merely a flesh wound in the thigh of the same leg that had been injured in the storm, and, as is frequently the case, rather accelerated the cure of that injury. The vital functions, thus extraordinarily aroused, it is well known, do often throw off the old as well as the new disease, by the one great effort thus concentrated upon the

local seat of the disturbance. Be this as it may, I did not suffer from lameness much after this, although I had a great amount of exertion devolved upon me by this sudden catastrophe.

The woman, after assisting me in dressing my wound, said to me gravely—

"Now, young man, much depends upon you! You are not a great deal hurt, as God would have it; while I am grievously, and my poor William must probably remain long in this stupor."

She was carefully examining him without disturbing my dressings, further than to saturate them with water.

"I can hope," she said, as she rose from the examination, and drew a long breath—"I can hope that your opinion of the wound may prove correct, for his pulse, though slow, is strong enough yet, but it must be a long time before he recovers his faculties. Young man, I have dedicated my life without stint or reservation to him, and although it is impossible for me yet to tell the extent of the injuries I have received, yet I must not stop to regard them. I count myself as nothing weighed in the scale with his usefulness. He must be saved at any rate, to finish his great work. I saved your life; and now all that I ask of you is to help to save him. Make no remonstrances!"—as I was proceeding to deprecate the disregard of self she spoke of—"make no remonstrances, my son," she said mournfully, "I must re-

quire it of you not to interfere with, but obey me, for the time. I cannot be moved—I will nurse him—you must provide us with food and water in the meanwhile. I want no further assistance. I know him best; you can render no assistance to him personally. God only knows how far this hurt of mine may prove injurious. I will be careful of it for his sake at least."

I assured her that I felt I owed my life to her, and I would now cheerfully resign it to serve either her or her husband.

"I knew as much, my child," she replied, "I knew as much; and it was selfish of me to remind you of obligation when you had already more than trebly repaid whatever there might be, by saving that dear body from the defacing hands of those murderous savages; come, let us place him on the poor bed."

We immediately removed him to his place upon a raised couch of dried moss and leaves, covered with skins, which had heretofore been resigned to me. As we laid him down his pulsation evidently quickened; but his eyes were still unopened, and his limbs remained palsied. I brought water from the spring, which I freely used under the directions of the woman, who by this time had become too faint for farther exertion. The only immediate effect was a partial one, even with our slight expectation. He breathed still more freely, and slightly moved his head. I now had to apply the same remedy to herself, and soon had the satisfaction, after using the cold water

freely, and enveloping her in skins, of which there was a large quantity piled on a sort of garret scaffolding near the roof, to see her fall into a deep but troubled sleep. I enveloped his body in much the same way, and then had leisure to look about me, and find what store of provision we had on hand.

I was greatly disappointed to find but little venison or meat of any kind stored in the house; and this filled me with uneasiness, for I did not yet feel myself strong enough to hunt, and could not help dwelling upon the frightful fate before us in the event of my wound proving worse than I anticipated. I did what I could for it, until the most resistless drowsiness overtook me, and falling upon a pile of skins, I sunk into a deep sleep, consequent upon extreme excitement and loss of blood.

I was waked by the cries of the woman, and, as I sprang to my feet, was horrified to perceive from the flushed appearance of her face, that she was suffering from a raging fever. She tossed her body violently to and fro, moaning as she pressed her throbbing head convulsively between her hands. It was a melancholy sight indeed. I knew but one remedy in reach; and if there had been a thousand, perhaps none would have availed so well as the simple one to which I now resorted, almost upon compulsion. I hobbled to the spring for a fresh supply of its cooling waters, and for hours I sat beside her, soothing her as well as I was able, by constant applications of cold water.

It was, or seemed at least, a weary time before I gained any ground, and my wound broke out afresh from the excessive fatigue; besides, I was faint with hunger. At last I thought I might venture to leave her a while, as she grew more composed, and I sought some food. I took a portion of our small supply and rekindled the coals of the smouldering fire; but the bleeding seemed to increase, and I was compelled to attend to my wounds before I could cook the flesh. I stopped the flow of blood, and was eating sparingly of the spare meal, when I suddenly became aware that she had fainted.

What could I do? What should I do? I was completely at a loss what to do under the unusual circumstances in which I was placed, and was sitting in dubious thought, when a loud hurrah, accompanied by the clatter of horses' feet, broke the stillness, and springing up, I rushed towards the door to see if it was yet secure.

As I reached it it was burst open violently, and in rushed my friend C———, the planter! followed by several negroes. He was a good-humoured, vehement, boisterous man, and exclaimed, in a loud voice, as his eye fell upon me—

"Caught at last!—Why, what's all this, my good fellow?" looking round him in astonishment and horror. "What sort of a den is this you have fallen into? Are those two people dead? What's been happening?"

"We've been having a brush with the Cherokees," I replied; "these persons are wounded."

"Hah! the very fellows I've just been drubbing. They carried the bodies of several killed and wounded. You must have had close work of it, my boy! We finished the business for them, though—only three got off."

"Glad of it; but help that woman, she has fainted."

"A woman here!" he exclaimed in evident surprise, "and in that dress!"

He sprang forward to the bed and looked at her.

"It is so, as I am alive. Boys"—turning to the negroes who stood at the door, rolling up the whites of their eyes in wonder and awe—"run, boys, and get some water—you saw the spring out there as we came?" Then turning to me with a broad expression of amazement, he asked—

"Who can these people be? Did they drop from the clouds? She's wounded! Did she fight too?"

Indeed she did—she did the most of it."

"But what are they doing here with all this droll trumpery? Did she faint from loss of blood? Is she badly hurt? This old man looks as if he were dead." So he ran on, without waiting for answer, and turning, stepped hastily to the door, and shouted at the top of his voice—

"You Tom!—Scip!—Jim!—come along with that water! Here are these poor people dying, and you lazy vagabonds, you—ah, here you are!" and the

three negroes rushed forward to the door of the room, bearing each a brimming gourd in one hand, and his rifle in the other.

While we still conversed together, and the planter was engaged in such kindly offices as his experience suggested for my invalid host and hostess, the latter awoke from her swoon, and after a little seemed to recover entire self-possession. "Does *he* live?" she said to me as she turned slowly towards the old man, and bent over him, feeling his pulsation. Before I could answer she looked up—

"Yes! it is all well as yet. Leave him to me—he will recover soon in my charge. Thank God! he was insensible while I was so—was he not?" she asked eagerly, turning her head.

"Yes; he has not moved yet."

"We can't leave this poor woman here alone!" exclaimed my friend, with returning self-possession. "We must remove them to my house and have them cared for."

"No, friend—that cannot be," said the woman; "we live here, or we die here. If you wish to do anything, send your slaves with provisions and some simple comforts. Leave that young man with me, and we will nurse him ourselves."

My friend was about to answer vehemently with his usual rough impatience of contradiction, but I appealed to him in a beseeching look for acquiescence—for the present at least. I found some difficulty, in

the hurried and whispered conversation which ensued while she turned to execute the affectionate offices of a nurse, in convincing him that it was best to let this strange woman have her own way, that we must humour her, or we could do nothing for her.

He finally consented, with evident reluctance, to remain with me, and send his negro servant, Tom, back to the plantation for supplies. It was about twenty miles distant, and we might expect to hear something of our scout by mid-day to-morrow. When it was explained to Tom what was expected of him, he accepted the mission with astonishing alacrity, and expressed with eagerness, in his own quaint fashion, his readiness to do everything that speed and energy could accomplish. He and his companions had manifested considerable surprise and suspicious apprehension about the odd-looking machinery in the place; and he now said, with a shamed and sneaking glance at me—

"She aint no witch—Jim is just the nigger fool I said he was! She be a good woman, massa!—Tom will gib he's scalp for her any time!" and springing upon his horse, he galloped away, rifle in hand, and alone across these dangerous wilds.

"Tom is all right now!" I said, with an attempt at a smile as we turned into the house.

"Yes; he's brave as a bull-dog when he knows what he's doing," answered my friend with a contemplative look as we turned towards the round house—

"but I would like to know where he gets his sudden confidence from."

I reconciled our planter in some degree to what, apparently, there was no mode of escape from.

The woman continued quietly to administer to her husband's wants in many sagacious though unusual ways, and he evidently improved.

Tom returned punctually the next day, bringing with him a supply of creature comforts, and leading my horse. I was greatly surprised to see the animal back again, and turning to my friend, stared him in the face, exclaiming—

"Why, where did Tom get my horse? This is the first time I've thought of him since the fight—I supposed he must have been carried off by the Cherokees."

He laughed heartily, while Tom grinned his broadest grin.

"Yah! yah! yah, massa! Dat witch-woman witch him back agin!"

Tom had brought another companion in whose pluck he had more confidence, I suppose, and they both laughed with great apparent enjoyment at this sally. My friend slapped me on the shoulder pleasantly.

"I'm afraid you would have gone off on a broomstick sure enough, but that your horse was wiser than yourself, and knew his way home better. We took his back trail, expecting to find some of your bones at least, and it brought us to this place."

"Well, I shall learn to place my trust in horses more hereafter—that is all!" and we proceeded to arrange our stores. In finding places to deposit them around the single chamber, I took an opportunity to examine the little recess of which I have made mention. I was not much surprised to find it filled with books —for that I was prepared to expect; but for the number of rare and valuable works upon ONE subject, I had never seen it surpassed, even in extensive and pretentious libraries. They were nearly all works upon social science and mechanics. I had only time to glance hastily over the titles, but they impressed me quite as strangely as had the appearance of the room and its wheels and models in the first place. This discovery only served to increase my curiosity.

We soon had everything arranged in some sort of rude comfort; and as it was too late for anybody to return to the plantation, my friend consented to remain until morning. My wound proved less formidable, now that there were others to wait upon the wounded. The old man was gradually waking, and the woman continued perfectly calm.

Tom was very active, and quickly produced for us an admirable supper. He was very alert in serving the woman, and would jump eagerly at her slightest gesture, and ran to do any errand she might require. It was even amusing to observe how reverentially he watched her, and obeyed the slightest

word or movement of the hand, and even endeavoured to anticipate her very thought.

She received it all as a matter of course, merely deigning the acknowledgment of a look. She seldom spoke to us, and then it was in an abrupt and almost imperative manner, which excessively disgusted my planter friend—though he obeyed her with nearly the alacrity of Tom himself, and then would come back to me growling in an under tone about "an insolent virago! a ranting wier-woman! a witch," &c. I did not pay much attention to all these expletives, for I felt how entirely impulsive they were, and how little they expressed his real feeling about her.

We passed the night quietly, and had the satisfaction to find in the morning that the old man had opened his eyes, and, after his bath, seemed entirely conscious, recognising me with a smile, and my friend with a slight but placid movement of the head. He made no attempt to speak, and it soon became apparent that he had, temporarily at least, lost the power of speech.

We were all greatly shocked at discovering this sad misfortune; but the woman, although I could clearly see that she shuddered at the discovery, remained apparently cool, and only remarked: "I said his recovery must be slow."

The planter was early ready to return, telling me that he would send over a servant every day or come himself to see how we were getting on. He offered

to leave Tom with us, but I declined it as unnecessary, and the woman peremptorily refused. Tom brought up the horses; the planter had mounted, and the other slave was also in the saddle, when Tom, who had been standing during the moments of leave-taking, came forward, and making a humble bow at his master's stirrup, said, in a faltering voice: "Massa! you please to gib Tom leave to stay here and wait on dis gemman and dat sick lady?"

"Why, Tom, she wont have you, my good fellow! I've offered to leave you already!"

Tom seemed greatly humiliated by this speech, and bowed his head with a look of deep mortification for a moment, and then lifting it suddenly, exclaimed, with a droll look of eager entreaty: "Dat no matter to Tom, massa! He sleep under de tree outside, and bring de wood, and fetch de water from de spring, and no look at um if she no like it for Tom!"

I said to the planter, in a low voice, "Perhaps you had better let him stay. The poor fellow seems to be very much in earnest, and may be of assistance."

"You know I wanted you to keep him; but what will this virago inside say to it?"

"O, I'll make his peace with her, I'll engage; but I want him to stay now, because this sudden and unexpected sort of sympathy and veneration for this woman interests me.

"O, very good! Tom, you may stay. It seems as

curious to me as to you. I shall come over as often as I can to see you all."

I did not mention the circumstance to the woman, having determined that she and Tom might settle the affair after their own fashion. For several days I could see nothing of him, though the wood and water necessary for us was regularly deposited at the door. The woman or myself, as it happened, would take it in; and as she made no comment upon the obvious singularity of the circumstance, I did not of course allude to it. Indeed, the terms of our intercourse were so monosyllabic that I could only speak to her concerning matters of plain necessity. Her wound had to be cared for as well as that of her husband. She sometimes remembered to cook, but when she did not do so I attended to that necessary duty myself. My friend had not returned, as I expected, nor had we heard a word from him.

The husband grew better with unexpected rapidity, and when he finally was able, with slight assistance, to resume his accustomed chair, it was a grand occasion with us; for the woman had evidently clung with a pertinacity, which was still afraid to precipitate its despair, to the hope that when he had recovered the use of his constitutional strength sufficiently to be able to use his limbs for locomotion, the faculty of speech would return to him; she had applied herself to the restoration of his health, and had, with an obvious feeling of trepidation, avoided calling out

from him the slightest attempt at using his voice. Now came the shock in full. We had seated him in the chair, and he glanced around upon the instruments of his labour. He even picked them up, such as were near him, with an affectionate familiarity, and seemed to think of resuming his labours where he left off. Her eyes brimmed and glistened as she watched him, and when he took up his magnifying glass she leaned forward and asked, with an eager and hopeful expression—

"William, is the light good?"

He nodded his head pleasantly, but spoke no word; she turned pale at this, and said, in an agonized voice, while with parted lips she hung upon his answer—

"William, why do you not speak?"

He made an inarticulate movement of the lips, raised his finger to them, and shook his head sadly. She clasped her hands and staggered backwards, but I caught her. For one minute she was motionless, except a slow shivering of the body; and with rigid features and lips compressed, leaned against me, with such an expression of hopelessness, that I could not help the tears springing to my eyes. But she soon recovered her self-possession, and resumed the charge of her household duties.

From this time she seemed to me as one stricken; she moved about in tearless silence, never speaking to me except when compelled, and then only in monosyllables.

She never attempted to speak to him again, except by looks or signs, of which they had in a few days established a simple but sufficiently significant system. I never heard this woman complain of her wound, though it was clearly a severe one, and she must have suffered greatly. She went calmly on as usual, watching every want of her husband, and even anticipating many. He had recovered sufficiently now to be able to resume his labour, and she kept near him all the time, seeming to understand perfectly the effect of every new combination attempted, and the purpose which was to be attained.

So much was she absorbed, that she never appeared to notice the fact that we had heard nothing from my friend the planter, and that still our stores of provisions, wood, and water, did not appear to diminish in the least, and that I had only to hobble to the door to bring them in each morning. She asked no questions, and saw nothing but what was required for her husband.

My life now grew monotonous. The eternal silence, broken only by an occasional word to me, which had sole reference to some one of the details of our material wants; that dumb worker, so earnestly plying his curious and delicate labours; that stern, and almost sleepless watcher, whose eyes were always upon him, and who scarcely seemed to be aware of my presence; that noiseless guardianship over our necessities from without;—all taken together, had

such an effect upon my imagination, that sometimes I half believed myself to be in a dream, and that the whole of these surroundings were unreal.

I had noticed for some days past that the eyes of the woman shone with an unusual brightness, and that to all my questions with regard to her wound she gave either evasive or abrupt answers. The ball had not yet been extracted, to my knowledge, though I had good reason to believe that this stern being had attempted to cut it out herself in private. In so deep a wound there would be, of course, a severe and dangerous sloughing. She had given me no sort of opportunity to judge how far it had progressed.

I was inexpressibly shocked when I saw her at last fall upon the bed her husband had so lately occupied, and with the first expression of utter helplessness I had yet heard from her, exclaim: "It is all over! The struggle is closed for me! *He* will finish the work alone!"

I reached her side as soon as possible. She was most painfully haggard, and her eyes seemed peculiarly ghastly. She recognised me with a smile of such genial sweetness, as for the first time showed me the depth and tenderness of that strong heart. She had never betrayed such feminine feeling in my presence before, so that I felt her recognition; she had kept all her sympathies with an austere exclusiveness for her husband. She now beckoned me to

come to her, and placing her hand upon my head, said, in a low, solemn voice—

"My son, while I am yet strong enough, I wish to explain much to you that you neither have nor could have comprehended. I seem to you, no doubt, wild and incomprehensible—my husband a dreamer! Neither idea is the true one. We are both enthusiasts, and love our common purpose more than we love each other—for a great thought is, and should be, far more sacred than any passion. We must work in our own despite and for our own self-respect—must be doing for the good of others, as well as ourselves!"

"But how!" said I; "It is easy enough to dig!"

"O yes!—to delve is the lot of our race! But I wander! The relation which I intended to give you is a very simple one. You asked me how we should work? I will tell you how I have worked, and why.

"I was poor—was a daughter of New England—proud and self-reliant—I determined very early in life that I would support myself. My parents, from whom my plan met but little sympathy, of course opposed violently my purpose to go to some great cotton mill, and work there for my own support. They were poor, too, but proud of an ancestral position; they could and would not resign it, as they supposed, to ignoble associations. We had a long

struggle, the effect of which was, that I learned to despise in my heart their cowardly apprehension of the opinion of the world. I carried my point, and must acknowledge that, for one day, my romantic delusion with regard to the general idea of associated labour in public mills and manufactories, was nearly kept up; but the filth and want of ventilation first shocked me.

"In a few hours after the excitement of my new position had passed, I began to feel myself stifled—my mouth was dry, and my lungs suffered from the cotton-lint, which filled the air in infinite particles. I nearly fainted when we were dismissed late in the evening, and the sensation was little decreased when I returned to my room in one of the regular boarding-houses. It was an apartment of seven feet by six, without a pretence of ventilation, and contained two beds.

"The food was horrible! The mercenary agents employed to grind and starve the life out of several thousand helpless girls proved worthy of their employers.

"Since, I have walked in the track of plague, cholera, and fever; but I have never seen anything so humiliating to personal dignity, so oppressive to individual health, so brutal in regard to the ordinary sympathies, as the whole system of these mills. The poor children of strength and poverty die off, as regularly as the moths of the silk-worm, in three or four

years at the most, or else they congeal into a sort of old-maid-withered state, which, in its wrinkled and painful distortions, is more monstrous than anything except perhaps the old English colliers!

"I could not be a slave! I would not be a minion. I left the mills—I left my family with the determination to work somehow. I had strong feelings that something could be done, even by one so humble as myself. But first I had to earn my own bread, and as my education had been good, and I had read eagerly since my early childhood, I thought myself qualified to act as governess, and advertised. I soon found a place. It happened to be in a rich and visionary family, every member of which had mounted some particular hobby of its own. I thought myself the most fortunate of adventurers for a while, but soon began to perceive that hobbies are hobbies.

"The family were very handsome, and the eldest son was particularly so. He early cast his eyes upon me. His advances were very subtle. He discovered my tendency towards what are called liberal views, and upon that key-note he contrived to play with such skill as accomplished his base purpose. I trusted in the affection which he professed for me, and believed implicitly in his honour. Deserted and abandoned, I was left a prey to despair. Why should I describe the sufferings of a strong nature under such wrongs?

"A feverish sense of unredressed wrong filled my mind, and seemed to demand retribution. My early education had implanted pride in lieu of all purer principles in my mind, and it was with a sense of gratified revenge that I afterwards witnessed his fall by an assassin's dagger. I fled the country, and came to Texas. In Galveston I met this man, my husband. I had lived there for several years, teaching the only regular school they had in the country. I had, after a fearful struggle, gained resignation, and learned to aim at higher motives and purer principles of action.

"Once I heard some ribald fellows of that rude society ridiculing a 'crazy old cove,' as they called him. They said he did nothing but 'work, work, work, all day; and that nobody could understand what the poor old fool was doing with his wheels and his stupid machines.'

"I at once determined to know this man. To be abused by such fellows was enough to persuade me in his favour. I went to see him. I found him as you have seen him, a mighty intellect with a feeble body. We became friends at once. My enthusiasm had only been 'driven in,' so to say, and now returned in full force. I found him alone, and almost helpless. He had no one to care for him, and could not care for himself; for, although he possessed some means, he was too much abstracted to attend to matters of personal comfort; so he lived in the most

squalid manner. He did his own cooking, and made his bed once a week; for he would not have a servant about him, because he feared he might disturb his work, the apparent chaos of which was his order."

"I talked over his schemes with him then," said she, "many a time, long and eagerly. He told me much that satisfied me. He showed me that the reform, for which so many true and devoted spirits were really labouring, was a different thing from the pretensions of professed reformers." The dying enthusiast now went on to tell me of the grand project which absorbed his mind, and had seemed no less worthy of admiration to her. He had conceived the extravagant idea, that if perpetual motion were once discovered, the necessity of human toil would be at an end, and its discoverer would become one of the greatest benefactors of his race. On his views in this respect she spoke with eloquent enthusiasm.

The great evils of our social system were to be reached through mechanics. Mankind was to be emancipated into leisure to cultivate the spiritual by the aid of machinery. Then the working-classes would have leisure, leisure to think and feel, leisure to cultivate the arts.

Her excitement had overcome for a time the sense of physical weakness, and partook in some degree of the feverish energy of delirium; but her strength was evidently failing rapidly. She placed her hands upon her eyes, and they looked very thin and feeble.

A shudder passed through her frame. She muttered, with increasing difficulty:—

"He dared attempt perpetual motion, and I dedicated my life to him, but more to the great thought. We came apart from civilization, and made us a home here by the labour of our own hands. Here he has worked and I have slaved, to the mighty thought that God may reveal himself in mechanics, as well as by other revelations, and the children of Eve be thus released from all slavery."

She fell back upon her pillow, and, as I started to my feet, a strange cry came from the husband.

She was dead. I turned my head from the realization of the scene, and there was Tom crouching close beside me, with his eyes betraying such an expression of horror and sympathy, that I was even more profoundly moved. He had evidently crept in, and been listening to everything she said.

Poor Tom! He helped me to bury this strange woman, with tears, and then we took the old man back to the planter's house, with all his wheels and models; but he soon fell into idiocy, and died not long after, leaving his life's labour in the hands of strangers to come to nothing.

## CHAPTER XI.

### BEAR-HUNTING.

THERE are those who can learn nothing through the experiences of others, however impressively presented; who must hear, see, taste, smell, and feel for themselves, before they can understand the most self-evident truths; and such has, to a great extent, been the way with me through life. After a brief sojourn at the plantation, I parted with my friend C——, determined to push on to the uttermost verge of settlement, or even beyond, if might be.

A solitary and perilous journey brought me to San Antonio de Bexar, then the extreme frontier post of Texas. On my arrival, I found the company of reckless adventurers, who called themselves rangers, and made this old town their head-quarters, in very bad humour,—what would you conjecture was the cause? Simply that there had been no fighting to do for a whole month.

I had never heard a spoiled belle complain half so pathetically of a decaying season, and the scarcity of company, as did these petulant amateurs of the late difficulties in the way of raising a fight. They seemed to imagine the whole world was conspiring against them, that a coalition, including not Mexicans

and Indians only, but even "his celestial highness, the brother of the sun," had been formed for the express purpose of killing them off through a stagnation of blood, supervening upon the monotony of an endless peace. Rather than die so base a death, they were vowing to rush into any extreme—sack some village or Catholic mission on the other side of the Rio Grande, or go up into the mountains and burn an Indian town, and see if that would not stir the hornets, and give them something to do.

After the deliberation due in such a strait, Hays, their good-natured little captain, too much moved, perhaps, by the desire to give them full amends for all they had endured, decided upon a bear-hunt in the mountains, not without a view to the possible chance which it afforded of an encounter with the Comanches.

Either of them was promising enough; but he, as in duty bound, selected that around which clustered the most promising results in perspective. To form some idea of his accommodating temper and their insatiable desire for adventure, imagine a party of eight white men and two Mexicans, traversing an almost desert prairie, three hundred miles in width, with the purpose of reaching the mountainous region near the sources of the San Saba river, in which lay the fastnesses of those formidable tribes that scour the plains of Mexico and Texas, with, furthermore, the pleasant prospect of having thousands of infuriated warriors

howling on their trail, back to the very square from which they started; that is, if, contrary to all probabilities, they ever should reach it again. After grasping all that this view presents, the reader may form some conception of what these gentlemen were contented to consider sport."

For myself, being just in the mood for any adventurous undertaking, I was delighted at having arrived in time to join the party, and nothing the less delighted at the extravagant gusto with which the fellows seemed to relish the idea of this highly-seasoned joke.

Captain Hays had thrown out a hint, as the attraction to any one who might need further incentive, or dream of hesitating, that if we had not seen too many Indians by the time we reached the foot of the San Saba ridge, we would recreate there for a time in killing bears, which animals were reported to be wonderfully abundant; and in collecting wild honey, to be drunk with the oil.

This last argument proved too much for a rotund and doughty little doctor, like myself, lately from the states, who had been slightly affected by some natural qualms of prudence; but now he was entirely occupied in anticipating the jovial scenes round the camp-fire. The best of the joke was, that after this we could not get the doctor to realize that there would be Indians to fight. His mind was entirely preoccupied with the prospect of a well-cooked bear-ham,

with its accompaniment of wild honey. Remonstrate as we might, he would see and know of nothing else ahead but these rare delicacies; nor could he be induced to make provision in his equipments for anything other than securing them. He had gotten hold of something he called a bear spear, which a wag had quizzed him into believing to be an infallible weapon in hunting that animal; then, in addition, slinging a small axe to his saddle-bow, to be used in cutting out the honey, along with a huge pair of holster-pistols, he declared himself, with great vivacity, "Ready, boys." We tried to induce him to throw away his spear and take a gun. But he would have his own way, and answered stoutly:—"What! would you have me unsteady my nerves by lugging a great gun?" And spurring his bob-tailed and vicious-looking pony into a canter, he led the way out of the square. We were all soon clattering after him.

It requires little time, after an expedition has been determined upon, for a troop like this to get ready for it; with his rifle, his pistols, his bowie-knife, his tin cup, water-gourd, buffalo robe, lariat, Mexican bridle, saddle and spurs, the jolly ranger feels himself prepared to go wherever his horse can carry him, and to meet all dangers. He never troubles himself to-day about what he shall eat, or what he shall wear to-morrow; for, so long as his eye is true, and his aim steady, his good rifle will supply him with meat for

food, and skins for clothes; and what more could any reasonable mortal ask?

In truth we were an odd-looking set, each one dressed in buckskin, fashioned and trimmed very much to suit individual taste, with no sort of respect to uniformity—our whole equipment making up a singular amalgamation of Mexican, Indian, and American costumes, while our arms were of almost every conceivable stamp. The most experienced hunters carried the old-fashioned long-barreled rifle, single-barreled pistols, and a heavy knife; while those of us just from the states were loaded with the newest inventions—six-shooting revolvers, double-barrels, and all sorts of new-fangled notions, which we supposed were to make us individually a host; for which unwarranted supposition we got ourselves laughed at most heartily, and were afterwards glad to have time for repentance.

Our horses, some of them mustangs, others American, had been carefully selected with reference to their speed and endurance, and all, with the exception of the doctor's nondescript pony, were fine-looking animals.

After clearing the narrow streets of the dilapidated town, and gaining the open prairie, which lay stretched like an ocean before us, it was a glorious intoxication to feel the noble brutes exulting in their strength, as they bounded over the undulations; and, in one shout, our pent-up spirits greeted the moun-

tain winds that came dashing their cool welcome against our faces.

A short but rapid ride through a lovely region—whose diversified features shifted in panoramic changes every moment as we dashed by—brought us to a small stream, which was to be our camping-place for the night; and here we must confess, that, as is invariably the case on the first night out, there was a sort of intoxication rife round our camp-fires very different from that healthy exhilaration we have spoken of. Our water-gourds, we had discovered, would hold "nouya" and "absynthe" just as well, and the evening was spent in as gay and reckless a carouse as ever chased the "lagging night-shades" with songs and laughter.

Of course, in such a state of things there was no watch set, and we all felt very foolish, on waking the next morning, to find some of our best horses gone—among them my own gallant American. Some of the thieving Mexicans of Bexar, having in view the well-known custom of the rangers to commence all long and perilous expeditions with a spree, had slunk and crawled upon our trail since we left town; and having ascertained our camping ground, kept themselves invisible until we were far gone in the profound sleep which followed our excesses; then crept near the camp, and cutting the lariats of those horses on the outside, rode them off!

Great as our vexation was, a general burst of

laughter rung out on all sides when it was discovered that an attempt had been made to carry off the doctor's pony too; but from the indications, it was plain that the vicious little rascal had been too much for the thief—for it had compelled that luckless personage to leave his "sombrero" under its heels, and the print of his prostrate form was plain enough on the damp grass.

Pony rose a hundred per cent. in the estimation of all parties forthwith, and his quaint owner with him. There was nothing for it but to wait patiently until those who had horses should return, and replace the stolen ones by purchases from the nearest "Cava-yard." As they had nearly a thousand to select from, we were consoled by the hope that we should get at least passable horses.

The return of our messengers late in the evening was awaited by myself, as well as the other unfortunates, with great anxiety, for all that could be hoped of either pleasure or security, on an expedition such as this, depended very much upon the character and mettle of our horses. It was in vain to regret the noble fellow I had lost, for he would be across the Rio Grande in the shortest possible time. I could only mutter vengeance against Mexican horse-thieves in general, and hope he might be at least tolerably replaced. It will be seen in the event that we did not attach too much importance to this circumstance.

When the detachment arrived, I was agreeably

surprised to find a powerful, wild-eyed, fine-looking animal assigned to me; but my pleasure was not a little dashed at discovering, as soon as I undertook to handle him, that he had never had a saddle on his back! Here was a poser with a vengeance! What was I to do with an untamed mustang, as strong as a buffalo, and vicious as a wild-cat? After enjoying a laugh at my chagrined look, on realizing this astounding fact, my tormentors suggested to me the only alleviation, which was to pay one of our Mexican guides a dollar, mount his horse, and let him take mine in hand for a day or two, in which time he would make him perfectly serviceable for me.

In a little while the copper-skinned knave was careering like the wind over the plains on my frantic steed, while the mischievous rangers comforted me with the assurance that we would probably come up with him in a day or two! However, he came into camp late at night, with the horse sweltering in foam, and nearly exhausted by a run of some ten miles and back, and assured me that he was "muey buena"—very good!—that is, he had been able to stand this tremendous race without falling dead in his track, which constituted the Mexican standard of excellence in these cases. I was eager to mount him myself next morning, for I did not fancy the idea of having his wind broken by this Mexican and summary process of taming.

I was approaching him incautiously, without pay-

ing any attention to the guide's reiterated "*No! no! por Dios!*" when he suddenly threw out his heels in such earnest that they clattered together just above my forehead, and reminded me that "prudence was the better part," so far as he was concerned, yet a while. I turned off with a feeling of high indignation at this ungrateful reception of my kindly intentions, and consigned him over to the tender mercies of the Mexican.

Our westward march was now resumed. We soon recovered that careless buoyancy which had been somewhat checked by the unpromising first night. The scenery was glorious, the air deliciously fresh and bracing, the doctor and his pony irresistibly comic; and the grouse was soon startled, whirring up from its grassy couch by the joyous bursts of tameless merriment. That same doctor, and his better part on four legs, were enough to have kept an army in a roar. I say better part, for the pony was as self-opinionated as he was cross-grained, and scarcely an hour passed that he and his rider had not some misunderstanding to settle, in the finally adjustment of which "bobtail" generally managed to get the best of it. On the slightest matter of offence being given, the irascible little pony would stop and bite at the doctor's short legs; when he, of course, jerking them back suddenly to avoid snaps, his armed heels would prick the pony's flank, who would spring forward with several quick successive leaps, which would

sadly discommode his rider's equilibrium, and, not unfrequently, would keep them up with such rapidity, that the tight round personalities of the doctor, after a flying ascent over his head, would plump into the grass; but as that happened to be very thick, and the ground very soft, nothing worse would come of it than a smart jolt, which the doctor would aver, with the most indomitable good humour, assisted his digestion.

Pony never seemed to feel at liberty to desert his friend, after he had demonstrated his affection in this curious fashion, but would stand perfectly still, and with a very demure, repentant look, take the kick which the doctor always favoured him with before remounting.

I have laughed till my sides ached at this quaint couple. The doctor was the strangest compound of simplicity and good humour that can be conceived.

The rangers were most of them gentlemen, in breeding at least, so that the days of our travel glided by delightfully, enlivened with pleasantries and tales of curious adventure, to which I was an untiring listener. I had, in the meantime, received my horse at the hands of the Mexican, and was very well pleased at his behaviour. The character of the scenery was now entirely changed. It had been agreeably diversified before, but now we had stretched around us to the horizon the fatiguing monotony of a dead-level, sterile plain, covered with coarse thin

grass, with only once in fifteen or twenty miles a clump of stunted bushes to relieve the eye. This continued for several days.

At last, however, just as we were beginning to be excessively wearied of it, a dim broken line looked in the lilac distance before us like a great bank of clouds. This, to our great relief, was announced to be the San Saba Hills.

"Now," said the little doctor, who had been looking somewhat disconsolate, but brightened up when he heard this, "now for the bear-steaks! And I warn you, gentlemen, that I shall win the first that are eaten, with this same spear of mine, which has been the subject of so much wit among you all! You need not laugh, I shall confound you before to-morrow night."

And saying this, he plunged his spurs into the sides of "bobtail" with such unwonted energy, that he, feeling himself furiously insulted, commenced a series of caperings even more vivacious and complicated than usual, and persevered in them with such determination, that, after a hard struggle, the doctor was fairly somerseted, bear-spear and all, amidst a roar of merriment. He got nimbly to his legs again, dealt two kicks this time, with a little more vigour than usual, and remounted.

By night we could clearly distinguish the different elevations, and the shaded valleys between them. We camped in high spirits, for no traces had yet

been discovered of Indians, and we were near enough the hills to reach them in time for sport in the morning.

We were early under weigh—our arms all overhauled and in fine order—with a keen relish for the rough work before us. As we neared the hills, they presented singular features. They rose directly and abruptly from the level of the plain we had been traversing. It seemed to be a succession of ridges, marched out like an army of Titans upon the meadows—the lowest in front—rising higher and higher as the eye traced each line back until it grew up into the clouds; and, from the level, we could look into the deep green valleys that went winding at their bases.

Those in front were by no means precipitous, but rose from the valleys with a gentle curve, clothed all the way to the top with mighty oaks, whose trunks stood far apart to give room for their long knotty arms, festooned with silvery moss, to spread over the girth not unfrequently of half an acre. As these trees forked very soon, and as there was no underbrush beneath, the heavy drapery of the moss hung drooping as from a low-roofed temple of the Druids; and the thick green sward spread under it, mellowed the gray shades deliciously. The trees became gradually smaller and more sparse, as the eye descended to the valleys, and then in the centre of each was a strip of prairie of the deepest verdure,

open to the sun. A few small trees were scattered along the feet of the ridges a short distance out into the prairie. We were all entranced in gazing upon this marvellous scene, which opened in new loveliness and grandeur as we approached.

The silence which had fallen round the party was broken by a quick, vehement exclamation of the doctor: "Egad! there they are! I'm into 'em, boys!" and away he dashed, with "bobtail" at his best speed, and flourishing the spear above his head!

Looking round in astonishment for the cause of this sudden outbreak, I saw the whole party bending forward in the act of letting out their horses, while their eyes were strained with a half-eager, half-comic look after the doctor. Following the same direction, I could distinguish, three or four hundred yards ahead, several black, unwieldy-looking objects, that seemed to be rooting in the long grass, just at the foot of one of the low knobs, and a little distance out in the prairie. One of them raised its head at the moment, and I saw that it was a bear! Hays exclaimed, as he spurred his horse—"Boys, we're lucky! They come down to feed on the snails!" At the same moment the company broke off like madmen. I followed, but having been pre-occupied, and less on the alert, was soon among the hindmost.

The valiant doctor had between fifty and eighty rods the start of us. His fiery little pony carried him straight up to the nearest bear, which stood upon

its hind feet stupidly snuffing the air, evidently greatly puzzled what to make of these new visiters. The gallant Æsculapian dashed up to it, and was raising his spear to strike, before the astonished animal had concluded to turn tail, which, when it did, it waddled off with great speed. But, as the doctor drove away manfully at its shaggy back with his weapon, in his eagerness he had ridden so close that pony, too, entering into the spirit of the affair, was biting with great vigour at its haunches.

Such a combination of assailants was too much for Bruin's patience, and it wheeled so suddenly, that, before pony could dodge, it had given him a wipe with its tremendous paws which brought him to his knees. This unexpected stoppage of course sent the doctor vaulting over the head of his beast. His dumpy figure looked so comical, as it went sprawling through the air, that one universal shout of laughter broke impulsively from every throat in spite of the imminent peril of his predicament.

Happily for the doctor, the pony, as the largest object, distracted the attention of the bear from him for an instant, and gave him time to regain his feet, and make for a low oak which stood near. Into this he mounted with inconceivable nimbleness, but the bear was close at his heels. He ran out upon a limb, but the inexorable monster still pursued. He finally got out as far as the limb would sustain his weight, and there he stood, swayed to and fro in the air,

holding on with one hand to the branches above him, while with the other he was pushing away most vehemently at the bear's nose with his spear, endeavouring to keep it at a respectful distance. This arrangement Bruin did not seem disposed to agree to, but was cautiously and slowly pushing his way out on the limb, for the purpose of making a closer acquaintance. To complete the picture, pony was prancing, stamping his feet, looking up into the tree and whining most furiously, as if he fully appreciated his master's danger, and was eager to get up to the rescue.

The whole scene occupied but a few seconds. The foremost of the party seeing the doctor mount the tree, had galloped on, laughing, in pursuit of the other bears; while we were so convulsed with merriment, that I verily believe the creature might have eaten the poor fellow whole before any of us would have recovered sufficiently to shoot, but for the interposition of Hays. He, by a great exertion of his remarkable self-command, so far recovered as to be able to send a ball through its head, which brought it to the ground.

There were now four bears in sight, who were making for the Knobs, and seeing that the doctor was safe, without pausing, we all swept by in headlong career, to arrest these fellows before they left the plain. The last I saw of the doctor for many a day, he was dangling from the end of that oak limb, in the

act of driving his spear into the body of the wounded bear; while pony, with his ears laid back, was kicking most vehemently at its writhing body.

The intensity of individual excitement was now all given to the chase. Our party had broken up into four groups, each of which had selected for pursuit one of the unwieldy brutes, who were getting over the ground with astonishing speed in a direct line for the Knobs. We pushed them so hard, that instead of attempting to ascend the ridges, they all diverged into some one of the narrow valleys I have spoken of. It happened that a young Virginian and myself had selected the same animal, and, before we entered the gorge up which he ran, all the others of the party had disappeared into gorges of the same character, which led them to the opposite sides of the ridges. I now began to notice, for the first time, that there was trouble brewing with my horse. He had caught scent of the bear, and seemed to be terribly alarmed, snorting and bouncing up from the ground with a short stiff spring, that almost jerked me out of my seat. Though his natural action was fully as great as that of the Virginian's horse, yet he, somehow or other, contrived not to get over much ground, and would not keep up. His manœuvres made me feel a little curious, though I am, and was then, a practical horseman.

I saw my companion closing upon the bear, which suddenly diverged from the valley, up the hill, and

lost sight of both behind an immense live oak, hung to the very ground with moss. In another instant he had fired two shots in quick succession. The idea of losing my shot entirely made me desperate, and reigning the horse's head with all my strength, I plunged the spurs furiously into his flanks.

Three or four frantic bounds, and he had brushed through the dense moss curtain under the oak, and came through on the other side, within five paces of the object of his terror, the bear, which had been disabled by the two shots, and was swaying its huge carcass to and fro, and gaping its great red mouth with roars.

Had my horse been suddenly turned to stone he could not have been more rigid than he became the instant his feet touched the earth. There was something positively awful in the paralysis of fright which seized him. His skin had been perfectly dry, and in a second big drops had started, running off to the ground. His legs were set and stiff; his nostrils prodigiously distended, but motionless; his eyes shot out, and fixed, in the fascination of terror, upon the hideous object. I was shocked. I drove my spurs into him with redoubled strength, wrenching at the bit at the same time. His head felt like a rock, and only a slight quiver of the muscles answered the spur. I fairly yelled with rage as I struck him over the head with my gun barrel. The blow sounded dull and heavy; but there was no motion, not even of an

ear. I never felt so strangely in my life. I was frightened myself.

At this instant, for all had passed in an instant, just as the Virginian was levelling his pistol for a third shot, our attention was arrested by the quick succession of firing, like a platoon, from the other side of the ridge, followed up by the stunning clamour, which has only to be heard once to be remembered for ever, of the Comanche war-whoop! and then, above us, the heavy tramp and rush of a troop descending the hill directly towards us! There was no time for deliberation. "The Indians! take care of yourself, Kentuck!" hastily exclaimed my companion, as he wheeled his horse and dashed down the hill for the valley. Cold comfort that—"take care of yourself," indeed!

I made one more desperate and unavailing effort to break the trance of the vile brute I strode, then sprang from his back, ran under the drooping moss, stepped up into the live oak, the forks of which were not over three feet from the ground, ran along one of its massive limbs, and had barely time to conceal myself behind a dense cluster of the moss, when, with deafening whoop, a bronzed and feather-bedizened crew of some twenty Comanches swept into the valley just beneath me. They paused for an instant on seeing my horse, who was standing as I left him, and one of them took the lariat from the saddle-bow; but just then they caught sight of the flying Virginian,

and, with a yell that made me shudder, dashed on in pursuit of him.

This broke the spell upon my mustang, and, with a sudden start and shrill neigh, he plunged wildly through the crowd, dragging the warrior who held the lariat from his seat, and nearly unhorsing two or three others; then he flew, rather than ran, out of the valley into the plains, neighing louder than the savages howled, till he was out of sight. In a little while they, too, disappeared; a gun or two followed at momentary intervals, and then the echoes faded into silence, broken only by the moans of the wounded bear beneath me.

I was stupified. These events were so strange, and had followed each other so rapidly, that I was dizzy and utterly confounded. Was it enchanted land? Here was I, three hundred miles beyond the remotest outskirts of civilization, perched in a tree; my horse gone; friends scattered or scalped; and the silence only broken by the moaning of the wounded bear at the foot of the tree.

All my logic would not do. Philosophise as I might, the awful conviction was settling on my mind that the party had been hopelessly scattered, and that I was left alone, with no experience to guide me back, and no hope of getting back on foot, if I had possessed experience. But it would not do to let this feeling gain the ascendant. I must have something to employ me. They might come yet.

So I deliberately descended, split the bear's skull open with my bowie-knife, and went to work very formally to dissect him. I managed to protract this operation to such a length, that, when I looked up, I was surprised to find that the sun was setting. But I had no longer to complain of the stillness. This was the signal for the voices of the wilderness to break forth.

A long screeching cry, that seemed right at my ear, made my blood curdle. I looked around. The limbs of an oak near were rustling and swaying, as under some great weight. The head of a panther peered out from between two bunches of moss. We looked at each other. He stretched his white throat from the covert, turned up his nose, and snuffed towards me. He smelt the blood. His eyes were large and gleaming; his face seemed so good-natured and familiar, that I felt for the moment as if we must be old acquaintances, and that there could not possibly be any harm in him!

He stretched his jaws to scream again, and I saw his long white fangs—the cat tribe are well furnished about the jaws. But, horror! his cry has a dozen echoes all around, far away and near. What shall I do? Shoot the panther in the eyes? Dead panthers tell no tales.

No; the Indians will hear the gun, and I shall have them swarming through the ridges to-morrow. That won't do. What then? Why, I'll climb to the top

of this oak, so that these nimble gentry cannot get above me, and I'll tie myself up there, and swing about till morning. So long as I am above them I am safe, for I can see their eyes as they come up, and rake down the limb.

This conclusion was forthwith acted upon. I did not like that panther to stand there watching me, for he would be sure to tell, and I should be besieged all night; so I picked up some round pebbles that were strewed along the hill-side, and took deliberate aim at his broad face. The first one cut the moss, just above his head. He looked up, with a quick movement, and low growl, evidently wondering prodigiously where it came from.

I tried it again. This time I struck the limb near him, and the stroke rang sharply. He clapped his paw over the place, clawed it, and smelt. At last I struck him, plumb! He saw the pebble fall, and go rolling down the hill, and with a savage growl leaped out of the tree after it, and went chasing it down into the valley. It was clear he thought the place bewitched; for he did not come back again.

I took some of the choicer pieces of the bear and hung them to a swinging limb, where they would be out of reach, and then ascended the oak. I climbed until I got so high, that, by standing straight, I could look out above the top, and see the stars twinkling.

The moon was just wheeling up from behind the mountains. They all looked too much like old times

to be pleasant just then; so I dodged my head beneath the shade of the moss again, and made my arrangements with the most accommodating forks for the night. That settled, I went to sleep counting the answers to the nearest panther's cry, and guessing how many there were.

Happily it is the order of nature that day must come, though it does seem to be a hundred years. And it has come at last. The wassailers of the night, striped, frecked, spotted, one and all, shrink away with the morning's light.

"Well," thought I, "as the coast is clear, I'll go down!"

"A pretty mess they have made of the bear. Fur, and blood, and bones! That salient thief did get my tit-bits, sure enough. Well, it is said there is such a possible thing as starving! I suppose I am beginning to feel something like the premonitories. I have tasted nothing since daylight yesterday morning; but they say an empty stomach for long wind, and I am likely to need all the wind I can raise before I get across this prairie. Some of my companions will be in sight, I trust, by the time I reach the mouth of the gorge. It cannot be that they are all scalped, and they must know that I am here. O yes, I shall see them, and what a laugh we shall have comparing roosts."

Such were my reflections as I set off down the valley; and reaching the prairie, strained my eye over the

desolate expanse, when not a living thing was to be seen. I went to the tree where I left the doctor dangling; the wolves had stripped the bones of the bear, and were still lingering around them. The spear was sticking between the ribs, where he had driven it, no doubt, with splenetic vigour. I looked around for some trace of his bones, but none were to be seen.

I climbed the tree to the top-most bough, and strained my eyes till they ached again. Wide and terrible solitude alone met my view, not an insect chirped, not a leaf stirred.

I slid out of the tree, and threw myself upon the grass. Long I lay there, half stupified, my brain whirling with fearful images. A solitary raven croaked overhead and aroused me. I knew it was one of the birds of ill omen, though I had never seen one before. I looked up. It sat upon the oak just over me, and the limbs were swaying with its weight.

Faint as I was, through long fasting and mental anxiety, the sight of this bird recalled to my mind the providence of Him that feedeth the young ravens! I felt now the sublimity of that figure.

As I looked up to the raven he uttered his ominous cry again, and spread his black wings and flapped away! The omen of his coming is not ill to me, I thought; where he goes there must be something to live upon.

It is no miracle that gives refreshing to these tireless wings. Ha! I have it. The snails! Hays said

the bears came down to feed upon them. I rose with new hope, examined the ground about me, and, to my great joy, found scattered here and there over the surface, a number of snails, some of them as large as my thumb. Ah! ha! I said, I should not starve! and a gleam of hope shot through my inmost soul.

Unattractive as such fare was, I was already in such straits as to feel delighted at the discovery, and exclaimed: I shall neither die of starvation, nor, unless I will it, at the hands of the Indians. There is game in the hills to be had for the shooting, but I do not choose to turn "root-digger," as I should have to do when my ammunition gives out. I burrow with my claws for the gratification of no one. The first shot would bring the Comanches upon me, and I am not ready for them yet! I shall go back among men, and show how much necessity and a stern purpose can accomplish. With nothing to creep behind, deer could not be approached on the dead level of the plain before me.

These snails that ghostly old croaker, the raven, has helped me to, will last so long as the sterility and the sand continue. Snails—snails that grow upon the sands, are not the most palatable of food, and furnish, moreover, rather a light repast for a walk of three hundred miles, it must be confessed.

Being refreshed, however, I looked at matters more coolly. The plain must be crossed; it lay between

me and life; and the sooner the attempt was made the better. So I girded up my loins and started towards the sunrise. All that I knew about the course was, that we came west, and therefore east must be the direction back.

There were no objects to assist me in keeping the right line. I must walk with my shadow behind me in the morning, and before me in the evening, looking steadily at the horizon, my gaze fixed upon some slight feature, a wave or curve of its contour just under the sun. All day long I walked with my eyes fixed on something, which turned out to be nothing that could be distinguished from the vast level plain around when I reached it. Yet I felt that I had kept the line, and that was a great deal. I had always to stop before it grew dark, to look for snails and water. For a day or two the snails were abundant, and I came to water at least once a day; but then they both began to grow scarce. The gnawings and parchings of hunger and thirst commenced at the same time. I could no longer keep my course steadily, for my eyes must be employed all the while in looking for food and water. A herd of mustangs would go by now and then, stop a moment to shake their silky manes, snort and stare in startled wonder, and then sweep on before I could approach within gun-shot. The deer would rise lazily from their couches of "knot-grass, dew be-sprent," prick their ears, toss their light heads, whistle, and bound away. The awkward cranes

would stalk to and fro, gesticulate with their long necks, and croak; then stop, spread their broad wings, and go with their long shanks dangling behind them. But I could never kill them; for, though hunger made me reckless at last, and I could fire, I would hear the shot rattle among their thick feathers: but it availed nothing. They still sailed croaking off.

These were the only living things, except "horned frogs," that I saw; and while my strength held out, I would chase the last, nimble, ugly little creatures, with an eagerness inconceivable. Yes, there were wolves too. Some of them were on my trail all the time, determined to be in at the death. O how fiercely I hated them. I tried all manner of devices to lure them within gun-shot, but it was of no avail. They were too subtle; though at night they would sit around and howl and moan for hours and hours, as if they were determined I should learn my own requiem by heart!

Snails and water were becoming yet more difficult to obtain, and I weaker and weaker every hour. Still I travelled on, though my gait was staggering. My senses became painfully acute. The clang of a crane's wing, or his croak as he rose, would thump and crash in my ear like thunder. The earth's smell became rank and oppressive; and when the breeze swept by, it sounded like the whirring of ten thousand wings. I began to see strange sights on the prairie. Armies with banners would hurtle by, and their tread would

shake the earth. It would turn out to be a flying troop of mustangs. Great lakes of water would glimmer in the sun before me, and when I would reel along a little faster to reach them, they would still travel on, and I could not lessen the distance between them and me.

In this condition I had been moving along like one in a dreadful dream, for two days, and yet no alleviation. I still clung to my gun; but how heavy it had become. It felt like Goliath's beam. Yet I would not give it up. I could not bear the thought of being killed without the opportunity of defence. It would have been a happiness to have met the Comanches, and died defiant.

I had almost lost the capability of further wrestling with inevitable fate, when I suddenly noticed on the prairie before me that which appeared like a cluster of trees. I was strong again in an instant. My feet seemed to be shod with some buoyant principle. "Water! water! water!" my parched lips articulated at every step. As I approached, I could perceive there were other "motts" scattered at wide intervals of miles in a line across the plain. This I knew indicated the presence of a stream; and O, what a thrill of hope it sent through my weakened frame.

In an hour I reached the nearest "mott"—a cluster of scrubby timber, covering about thirty square feet—and I almost screamed with eager delight as I saw from the gully on which it stood the

gleam of water. I dropped my gun, tumbled down the bank, threw myself prostrate on the brink, and plunged my head up to the shoulders in the clear fluid. I gulped several huge rapid swallows on the instant; horror of horrors! it was as salt as brine! It all came up in an instant, and it was like tearing out my vitals. The blackness of darkness came around my brain. I was insensible.

I cannot tell how long I lay there, but I fell with a portion of my body in the water, and this revived me. I waked to consciousness, with my brain clearer than it had been for several days. I felt that the game was all up now, and a strange calmness took possession of me. I smiled even, to think what a wild feverish struggle I had gone through to preserve a boon so utterly worthless as life now seemed. The fancy took possession of me, that I wanted to lie down on the green moss under the trees. I must make one more effort to get there. I attempted to crawl, but was too weak, and fell! I lay for some time, and still that fancy haunted me so singularly, that my powerless limbs regained a partial vigour; I crawled on my hands and knees up the bank. It took me a long time to do this. I felt as if it was my last duty, and desperately I struggled to accomplish it. I still held my gun, however, and dragged it along with me.

I reached the mott. There was one bright green spot, under the largest tree, in the centre. I managed to reach it, and stretched myself upon my back, with

my gun by my side, and my head resting on a cushion of moss near the root. My eyes were closed. An indescribable sense of weakness pervaded my being. I felt that I should never rise from that place again. But I had grown calm, and was slowly sinking to rest. The loved faces of that far away home came around me for the farewell. I felt that I should never lose sight of them again: that before many hours I should feel myself, buoyant as they, rise up from the damp earth, and float away towards the stars. A sunbeam, struggling through the leaves, fell on my closed lids, and awoke me back to earth again. I opened my eyes for one more look at the glad sun and beautiful earth. I looked up.

Directly above me, within six feet of my face, crouching close to the body of the tree, was a large fox-squirrel. The instant my eye fell upon it, I felt that I had been reprieved, and life and all its objects rushed back upon my heart again. Not a shadow of an idea crossed my mind that there was even a possibility of the creature escaping me. I felt as well assured that I should get back to Bexar, and home, as if I had already been sitting in the old rocking chair.

I slowly, and with care, lifted my gun with one hand, without changing my position at all, raised it, and fired. The squirrel fell upon my breast. I sat up, drew my knife, cut it up, sucked the blood, and ate as much as I cared, at once, raw! and then, with

an earnest prayer of thanksgiving and praise, sunk back, and was soon sound asleep.

On waking from a long sleep, I finished the remainder of the squirrel, and felt quite able to walk again; though, on attempting to rise, I staggered sorely for a while.

In about two hours I saw two men on horseback, herding a drove of cattle. The men rode towards me. I saw they were Mexicans, but fortunately unarmed. I knew there was nothing to expect from these traitorous wretches by fair means, so I concealed my gun by running it up my hunting-shirt, and waited for them to come within range. They approached very cautiously, and when they were within thirty paces of me, I drew my gun suddenly forth and brought it to bear upon them. They were desperately frightened, and would have wheeled and galloped off, but something in my look showed that I was not joking. I ordered them up to me, dismounted the one on the best horse, took his seat, waved my hand in adieu to the chopfallen Mexicans, who had, I have no doubt, expected to plunder me, and galloped off.

The motion of the horse was dreadful. I remember dropping the bridle, and seizing the high pommel with both hands, while the horse dashed off towards the eastward, at the top of his speed. The next thing I remember was being lifted off by the rangers at the door of Johnson's, in the square of Bexar. I heard

one of them say, "Poor fellow! I thought it was his ghost."

The days were a blank then for several weeks. My next waking was in a pleasant room, in bed, with the little doctor bending anxiously over me. I was safe —the crisis was past. The doctor had been wounded himself, and was now a spare, thin little body. He too, as I learned, had seen his troubles.

It appeared that the body of Comanches had been very large. They had attacked the different detachments of our scattered party very nearly at the same time, and so entirely dispersed it, that not more than two ever got together again. Two men had been killed, and several others wounded. Hays had saved the doctor's life, with the aid of his faithful pony. All had a hard time coming in; but my case was the most desperate.

## CHAPTER XII.

### HUNTING PECCARIES IN TEXAS—A BEAR-HUNT.

NATURALISTS are very fond of calling American animals cowardly. This sweeping statement is only a partial truth. The animals of the American continent were originally just as ferocious towards man as were any of the most formidable of the Eastern

hemisphere, in proportion to the size and strength of the races.

Our forefathers, with their terrible rifles in hand, found our wild beasts quite sufficiently disposed to dispute ascendency with them in the land. They had been accustomed to grapple with the red man, armed only as he was with lance and bow, and in these conflicts the animals were by no means unfrequently the conquerors. Now they are compelled to battle with a new and invisible power—an agent as mysterious in its operations as it is terrible in its effects—which, as it overawed and intimidated their ancient foes, the red men, might well be expected to fill them with dread.

The growth of this wholesome fear has been very gradual and slow. The rifle had driven them from frontier to frontier of all the older states, before any marked change in their respect for man began to be apparent.

However, let any of those believers in the cowardice of our wild animals, even at this late day, venture into the fastnesses of the Dismal Swamp, or any of those enormous cane-brakes locked up within the sluggish embrace of the bayous of the Mississippi, and propose to risk a collision with the first panther or bear he meets, and he will see what a reception he will find! Let him be armed with as many guns and pistols as he can carry, I'll engage he will need to make the most of them.

The fact is, the introduction of fire-arms, in modifying the face of the whole globe, physically as well as morally and mentally, has not failed in its effects upon savage animals as well as savage men.

Before the East India conquests of the British introduced fire-arms, the bold and open ravages of lions, tigers, and other wild beasts, were frequently carried to such a formidable extent, that whole villages of the natives were depopulated by a single animal, to destroy which armies had to be assembled; and even they have been beaten back from the jungles without effecting their object more than partially. When British officers first commenced lion and tiger hunting, it was considered the most dangerous sport in the world; and the records and correspondence of that period teem with fearful tales of bloody deaths at the horrid jaws of those animals. At that time, the tiger, without hesitation, attacked large parties of men, leaping into their midst from the jungle, and carrying off a victim without regard to epaulettes or colour; while the lion charged boldly into camps, carrying off men, oxen, or any other dainties that happened to suit his taste.

In hunting on elephants, it was so exceedingly rare to find one who would charge a jungle after the scent of the tiger had reached him, that such an animal commanded the highest prices. Now the tables are so entirely turned, that we rarely or never hear of any one being carried off by these animals, whether

native or not, except in the remote interior of the forests of Bengal and Africa, into which the heavy and formidable rifle of the British sportsman has not yet carried its terrors; while hunting on elephants has become a sport, attended with nearly as little danger as a fox-hunt at home.

Nor are these gradual ameliorations of temper or habits, so far as mankind are concerned, confined to quadrupeds alone: birds, and all other creatures, partake of them, in degrees proportioned to their intelligence. It is notorious how soon game-birds, and the whole family of rapacious birds, learn to distinguish a man with a gun from a man without a gun; and with such sagacity will they do this, too, that we are seldom able to surprise them by any stratagem of concealed weapons.

But all rules have their exceptions, and it is to treat concerning one of these exceptions that this chapter has been written. Certainly, however much other wild animals may have yielded to the supremacy of that dread machine, behind which man has entrenched his physical inferiority, the peccary cannot be accused of the same weakness. The irate valour of this curious little animal seems to be entirely unaffected by all those sudden influences, the unexpected supervention of which are sure to cause panic in other beasts. Ungovernable rage seems to take the place of this panic—a rage quite as headlong and as blind. Though scarcely more than eighteen

inches high by two and a half feet in length, it is yet really one of the most formidable animals belonging to our hemisphere. It is gregarious, and goes in droves of from ten to fifty. Its jaws are armed after the manner of the wild boar, with tushes, but they are of very different shape, and if possible, more to be dreaded. They stand straight in the jaws instead of curving upwards, and have the form as well as keenness of the lancet blade. Their motions are as quick as lightning, and with shoulders, head, and neck possessing extraordinary muscular power, they manage to slash and gash in the most horrible manner with these little weapons, which are only about an inch and a half in length. As they do not hesitate to attack anything or anybody, big or little, provocation or no provocation, that may chance to cross their paths, men and animals very soon learn that their only safety is in flight. As they rush upon the object in a body, and fight until the last of their number is slain, it is fruitless to stop and battle with them, as they would cut either man or the largest animal so badly before they could all be despatched, that the victory would prove a dear one indeed.

There is no wild animal that will stop to fight them, and men, dogs, and horses run from them in the most ridiculous consternation; indeed, they are the very terror of hunters.

This droll creature seems to be exactly the intermediate between the family of hedgehogs and that

of the wild boar or common hog. Its general form, so far as the body is concerned, resembles rather more that of the hedgehog, while its hair, which is about the average length of the bristles of the common hog, is thinly set in a rough skin, and flattened and sharp, as are the spines of the hedgehog, and of the same bony consistence in appearance, though so thin as not to be prickly to the touch, except very slightly, when erected, as they always are if the animal is enraged, after the manner of the whole family of porcupines. These thin spines or hairs are also parti-coloured, being barred with the muddy white and bluish chocolate, producing the general effect of a roan; they are destitute of a tail (excepting merely a fleshy protuberance), in common with the hedgehog, and have that curious gland which is vulgarly called the "navel on the back." This depression of the spine, which is directly over the loin, contains a deposit of a certain musk, which the animal gives forth when excited, and which assimilates it again with the civet-cat of the East. Its shoulders, neck, and head, resemble the wild boar quite closely in conformation, though the outline is much more delicate, and sharpened at the snout. Its legs and feet, also, are much like those of the boar. Its food partakes of the character of that of both the boar and the hedgehog, consisting of mast, wild fruits, grains, grasses, shoots of cane, roots, herbs, reptiles, &c.

But, with all its other peculiarities to answer for, the drollest is yet to come. I refer to their mode of sleeping. They usually frequent those heavy cane-brakes, through which are scattered at wide intervals, trees of enormous size and age. These, from their isolated condition, are most exposed to the fury of storms, and, therefore, most liable to be thrown down. We find their giant stems stretched here and there through the cane-brakes of Texas, overgrown with the densest thickets of the cane, matted together by strong and thorny vines. In these old trees the peccaries find their favourite lodgings. Into one of these logs a drove of twenty or thirty of them will enter at night, each one backing in, so that the last one entering stands with his nose at the entrance. The planters, who dread them and hate them, as well on account of the ravages on their grain crops which they commit, the frequent destruction or mutilation by them of their stock, their favourite dogs, and sometimes even their horses, as on account of the ridiculous predicaments, such as taking to a tree, or running for dear life, to which they have been subjected themselves, seek their destruction with the greatest eagerness. When a hollow log has been found which bears the marks of being used by them, they wait with great impatience till the first dark, cloudy day of rain. A dark drizzle is the best, as it is well known that on such days they do not leave their lodgings at all.

The planter, concealing himself just before day carefully out of view, but directly in front of the opening of the log, awaits in patient silence the coming of sufficient light. Soon as the day opens, peering cautiously through the cane he can perceive the protruded snout and sharp watchful eyes of the sentinel peccary on duty, while his fellows behind him sleep. Noiselessly the unerring rifle is raised, the ring of its explosion is heard, and with a convulsive spring the sentinel leaps forward out of the hole, and rolls in its death-struggle on the ground. Scarcely an instant is passed, a low grunt is heard, and another pair of eyes is seen shining steadily in the place the others had just held. Not a sound is heard, the planter loads again with such dexterity that not even a branch of the embowering cane is stirred. Again, with steady nerve, the piece is fired, out springs the second victim, as the first had done; then another takes its place, and so on to the third, fourth, fifth, or twentieth, even to the last of the herd; unless he should happen, by some carelessness, to make a stir in the cane around him, when out it springs, with a short grunt, without waiting to be shot this time, and followed by the whole herd, when they make a dash straight at the unlucky sportsman, who is now glad enough to take to his heels, and blesses his stars if he should be able to climb a tree or a fence in time to save his legs. If, during the firing, the sentinel should happen to sink in the hole without making

the usual spring, the one behind him roots out the body to take its place. They do not understand what the danger is, or whence it comes. Neither do they fear it, but face its mysterious power dauntless to the last. They never charge towards unseen enemies, until guided either by the sight of some disturbance caused by a motion in the thicket, or by those sounds, with which they are familiar, indicating their position. Incredible as this account may appear, it is actually the method in which the settlements along Caney Creek and on the Brazos Bottoms have been, of late years, in a great measure relieved of this dangerous annoyance. When one is taken in a snare or trap, it is torn to pieces by the others in their eagerness to get it free. The planters heartily enjoy the relation of these adventures, as there are many mirth-provoking scrapes connected with them.

My first adventure with the peccaries I shall never forget. I was stopping with a planter on Caney Creek for a few days of rest and recreation. He was an old friend from my native state, had been one of the early emigrants to Texas, and was now settled with his brothers on a magnificent plantation, of which their joint enterprise had made them possessors. I was yet comparatively a new-comer, young, eager, and, notwithstanding all the incidents of my late initiation to such life, an enthusiastic sportsman. Of course I listened curiously to their many relations of adventures in the chase, which always form the

chief topic of the social intercourse of the border. It happened that the peccaries had lately been doing much mischief to their crops of grain, and as they had been hunting them with great zeal and wrath, they formed the principal theme of narrative and denunciation. Their invectives became quite amusing, as they took me out to show me several of their finest dogs, which had been disabled by the shocking mutilation received in accidental meetings with this fierce little animal. I say accidental, because no dog could be found hardy enough to hunt it, after having had one taste of its quality. The eldest brother told me of a meeting with them the day before. He had walked out with his rifle into a field of grain on the border of the plantation, to look for fresh traces of the bear, which, together with the peccary, had almost utterly destroyed his corn. Here, by way of parenthesis, he exclaimed, "And I did find the tracks of a whopping old he-bear."

"Let us go hunting him then this morning," we all exclaimed in a breath.

"Well, well, we'll see."

When near the outside fence, he suddenly came upon a drove of peccaries in the very act of spoliation. It was too late to retreat decorously, for he had already been seen, and, as is usual, they came charging headlong upon him, grunting and snapping their white tusks at every jump. It was useless to stop to shoot; taking to his heels was his only chance.

He made for the fence, which he succeeded in climbing before they reached him. The foremost of them reared themselves on their hind legs, endeavouring to reach him, cutting at his feet with their sharp tusks most viciously. It was a loose worm fence, and not very high, and they kept him there for a few moments, dancing, to use his own expression, "like a hen upon a hot griddle," while he fired as rapidly as he could load. He had killed several without any diminution of their ferocity. It rather indeed seemed to be increased, if possible, when suddenly, to his unutterable consternation, the frail fence broke down, and he measured his length backward in the cane outside. He sprang to his feet, as you may imagine, with some celerity, and, before they could reach him over the ruins of the fence, had fairly vacated. After a hearty laugh at this ridiculous misadventure, the preparations for the bear-hunt immediately commenced.

We were soon mounted and under weigh, four of us, attended by a negro "driver" on horseback, who, with his long cow's horn swung about his neck, was to put out the pack. The dogs were a fine and powerful breed, used exclusively for bear-hunting, and came of a cross of the bull-dog on the fox-hound; they were all scarred with the tusks of the peccary and the claws of the bear. On our way across the plantation, my friend was particular in counselling me how to behave in the event of any unpleasant

rencontre with the peccaries; for he assured me flight was my only alternative, unless I desired to have my horse ham-strung, or every leg hopelessly gashed. I promised to be very prudent, of course, but with the opening yell of our dogs, all recollection of the existence of such creatures as peccaries vanished.

There was a nobler quarry on foot, and we plunged our horses eagerly into the narrow tracks opening into the cane-brake in the direction of the chase. We soon found ourselves riding beneath the matted arches formed by the meeting of the cane-tops, bound together by vines, ten or twelve feet above our heads. The cane on either side formed a wall so close, and seemingly so impregnable, that it seemed to me that a starved lizard would have found difficulty in making its way between the stems. So long as we could remain in the paths, of which there were but few, it was all very nice and exciting to listen to the fitful music of the chase; but when it came bursting on us with a roar of fitful yells, that made our horses shiver with eagerness, and we scattered, each man for himself, trusting to his own ear, to enable him to intercept the chase, and win the honour of the first shot, then the rough and fierce realities of a bear-hunt began to be realized. My fiery horse plunged into the thickest of the brake, requiring my whole strength to keep him within anything like bounds. Now the bear had commenced circling in short turns through the tallest and most

dense of the cane; and very soon, when the thundering chase went crashing past me, utterly invisible, though within fifteen paces, my horse became entirely unmanageable, and in three or four furious bounds I was torn from the saddle by the interlacing vines, through which he was endeavouring to burst his way. I held on to the reins, and recovered my seat, without stopping to count bruises; but the shock of the fall had brought me to my memory. I now did what I should have done at first, had I retained my self-possession, drew my heavy bowie-knife, and commenced cutting my way through the brake. Meanwhile the chase had made another tack; and followed by the yells of my half-crazy comrades, the wild route turned crashing and roaring towards me again. This time my horse was even worse than before. At the first plunge he again became entangled in the vines, and whirling round and round in his furious efforts to release himself, I soon had the satisfaction of finding myself and horse twisted up in a net that would have defied the strength of Samson to have burst. The pleasure of this predicament was not a little increased by the sight of the bear rushing past at a few feet distant, with the whole pack biting at his heels.

Alas for my prowess! In what a helpless case was I. The moment my horse saw the bear, he uttered a wild neigh; it was the first one he had ever faced, and backed with such ungovernable terror and

strength, that I was almost torn to pieces by the vines, and choked into the bargain. However, at the expense of my coat-sleeve, which was torn out of the arm-hole, my bleeding right arm was freed from the mesh, when a few desperate strokes of my bowie-knife freed us from our desperate thraldom. Now came, from near at hand, the deafening clamour of baying, shrieks, and hoarse growling, which told that the bear had stopped to fight the dogs. Now is the chance for the coveted shot, and it required no spur to urge my horse in that direction. I commenced hewing my way towards the scene, which seemed to be at the foot of a large tree. I heard the shouts of my friends, who seemed to be urging their way towards the same point. At about the same moment two of us burst our way through the wall of cane into the open space, about twenty feet in circumference, that had been beaten down by the weight of the enormous bear during the battle. And such a scene as it was! The bear, hearing our approach, had made an attempt to climb the tree; and the dogs, encouraged by the same sounds, had made a simultaneous rush, and were literally all over his huge carcass, having hold of him on every side; our guns were instantly presented, but we feared to fire lest we should kill the dogs.

While we stood thus hesitating, and the bear was tossing the poor dogs like shuttlecocks to the right and left, quicker than thought, a troop of grunting

peccaries came rushing in, and charged headlong upon bear, dogs, and all. Such yells, and screams, and roars of pain, and such a medley helter-skelter rout as now occurred, would be difficult to describe. The wounded dogs, with tails between their legs, came skulking towards us. The bear, frantic with pain, rolled his great carcass to and fro, and gaped his red mouth, as he struck blindly about him here and there. The grunting and rushing patter of an addition to the herd coming in behind us, waked us from the sort of stupor this unexpected scene had thrown us into for the instant. "Run, run!" shouted my friend, with a voice half-choked with mingled rage and laughter, and such a scurrying on all sides, for the other hunters had just come in, and the cry of "Peccaries! peccaries! run! run!" and the popping of our guns all round at them, as we urged our horses to escape through the cane, closed this eventful scene of my first introduction to the peccaries!

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE BUFFALO.

THE wildest scenes to be witnessed on the Western hemisphere are those connected with buffalo-hunting on the great plains. This huge and shaggy brute

affords a strong contrast in size with the fierce and bristling little peccary, though in many respects the formidable character of the two may be traced to a single and similar cause. The "downward eye," common to them, is this cause. Neither of them, from the stiff and peculiar structure of the neck and placing of the eye-balls, can, without an effort, see beyond the direct plane of vision presented to the habitual carriage of the head.

Whatever is thus exhibited to the peccary that has motion, if it be merely the legs of an animal, it charges upon, as we have seen; while the buffalo, which is less spontaneously pugnacious, may regard the same as an object of stupid suspicion, or of headlong, blundering terror. The buffalo must be wounded to turn upon the pursuer, and then the charge of the goaded and frantic monster, being always in a straight line, is disarmed of half its dangerous character, as the hunter is thus readily enabled to elude the effects by a quick side motion.

The eye of the horse being more prominently placed, it is enabled soon to acquire this facility of advantage; and it is surprising with what wary confidence the trained steeds of a Black-feet, Sioux, or a Comanche will dash in and through an interminable herd of these prodigious beasts, winding in and winding out, amidst the surging tumult of horns and heels, without receiving a scratch.

On no other conditions could this powerful animal

be assailed with sufficient effect to answer the requisitions of the numerous tribes upon it for their yearly subsistence. Were they able only to assail the outskirts of the herds, the foraging they might do would be meagerly enough eked out upon the weakly bodies of the sick and wounded and superannuated lingerers.

Indeed, were the buffalo possessed of the same alert, high-headed, and agile motions as the wild horse, in addition to the bovine rage with which it seems so easily inspired: the weight of the fore-parts of its body, and of the closely-packed, incalculable columns in which it moves, would make it the most formidable brute on earth, and enable it to trample the mightiest armies of men like grass in its path. There is no object in nature so terrible as the headlong advance of a great herd of these animals thoroughly aroused by terror. Niagara itself is not more tremendously resistless than that black, bellowing torrent which is thus sometimes poured through narrow defiles of the Rocky Mountain steppes, or suddenly turned loose like a roaring flood, to overwhelm the plains.

No sights equalling this are witnessed elsewhere on the face of the earth, though South Africa exhibits some approximation to them in the migratory movements of the spring-bock and other antelopes. A herd of elephant bulls is properly esteemed to be a sight of no ordinary wonder by English adventurers in Africa, but the masses in which the bison of the American plains are accustomed to move have no parallel.

When we think that at a rough estimate, more than seventy thousand souls of the native tribes upon the plains depend solely on the slaughter of buffalo for food, covering, and in a great measure for implements; and then put this together, with the consideration that probably not more than one out of twenty of the animals slain is consumed, beyond the mere hide or hump, by these thriftless and wasteful people, some estimate may be formed of the aggregate increase necessary to keep up a supply sufficient for the demand in this one quarter.

The inroads of our own race upon them, though great, are as yet comparatively insignificant. We are merely guided by the convenience of the moment, and have slaughtered them rather as objects of necessary food, than of commercial interchange and profit. The wealth and dignity of the Indian warrior, on the other hand, is nearly proportioned to the number of buffalo robes he can afford to dispose of to the traders, and therefore this article is to him the representative of value. Hence he follows upon the track of the migratory herd, and when undisturbed, continues to slay them, with the sole and improvident reference to the value of the skins at the nearest trading post; while the object of food, amidst its reeking abundance, is merely an incidental one. As it may chance, he merely cuts out some tit-bit from the individual slain, or leaves it, after stripping the skin, to the wolves who follow faithfully in the wake of their sure purveyor.

The extent to which this massacre is, and has been habitually carried by the prairie Indians, can hardly be computed; yet we have the strange and significant fact that they have among them no tradition of an appreciable diminution in the numbers of the buffalo thus wantonly slaughtered by them from remotest periods, which antedate the first appearance on their plains of the white man with his destructive fire-arms. From this ominous event the tribes date those fatal refluxes in the stated periods and courses of migration of the herds, which have been attended by disastrous famines among their people. Before this hated coming they and their fathers had been accustomed to calculate, with the same certainty with which the sailor does the ebb and flow of the ocean tides, these annual migrations, and could move with or follow them at leisure and with confidence; but suddenly the mighty herds have snuffed some hidden danger on the tainted breeze, and breaking away in mad and scattered career over the plains, have defied pursuit, to gather again in some remote and unaccustomed pastures beyond the reach of this vague, indefinite dread which has met them.

Of all the modes of hunting the buffalo practised by the prairie tribes, there is no one, the accompaniments of which are of such characteristic and terrible wildness, as that in which the Indians drive a maddened herd of buffaloes over the edge of one of those tremendous rifts or abrupt gullies which yawn

across the vast plains of the American prairies. These are vast natural fissures, suddenly opening on the great *Plano Estacado*, which stretches in one prodigious plain from the foot of the Rocky Mountains to the head waters of the Red River, Arkansas, &c. Mr. Kendall's description of this scene in his Santa Fe Expedition is so vividly accurate, that I give it here in his own words:—

"We had scarcely proceeded six miles, after drying our blankets, when we suddenly came upon another immense rent or chasm in the earth, exceeding in depth the one we had so much difficulty in crossing the day before. No one was aware of its existence until we were immediately upon its brink, when a spectacle, exceeding in grandeur anything we had previously beheld, came suddenly in view. Not a tree or bush, no outline whatever, marked its position or course, and we were all lost in amazement, as one by one we left the double-file ranks, and rode up to the verge of the yawning abyss.

"In depth it could not be less than eight hundred feet, was from three to five hundred yards in width, and at the point where we first struck it, the sides were nearly perpendicular. A sickly sensation of dizziness was felt by all as we looked down, as it were, into the depths of the earth. In the dark and narrow valley below, an occasional spot of green relieved the eye, and a small stream of water, now rising to the view, then sinking beneath some huge

rock, was foaming and bubbling along. Immense walls, columns, and in some places what appeared to be arches, were seen standing, modelled by the wear of the water undoubtedly, yet so perfect in form, that we could with difficulty be brought to believe that the hand of man had not fashioned them. The rains of centuries, falling upon an immense prairie, had here formed a reservoir, and their workings upon the different veins of earth and stone had formed these strange and fanciful shapes.

"Before reaching the chasm, we had crossed numerous large trails, leading a little more to the west than we were travelling; and the experience of the previous day had led us to suppose that they all terminated at a common crossing near by. In this conjecture we were not disappointed, for a trot of half an hour brought us into a large road, the thoroughfare along which millions of Indians, buffaloes, and mustangs, had evidently travelled for years. Perilous as the descent appeared, we well knew that there was no other near. The leading mule was again urged forward, the steadier and older horses were next driven over the sides, and the more skittish and intractable brought up the rear. Once in the narrow path, which led circuitously down the descent, there was no turning back, and our half-maddened animals finally reached the bottom in safety. Several large stones were loosened from their fastenings by our men during this frightful descent; these would

leap, dash, and thunder down the precipitous sides, and strike against the bottom far below us with a terrific and reverberating crash.

"We found a running stream on reaching the lower level of the chasm, on the opposite side of which was a romantic dell, covered with short grass, and a few scattered cotton-woods. A large party of Indians had encamped on this very spot but a few days previous, the wilted limbs of the trees, and other signs, showing that they had made it a resting-place. We, too, halted a couple of hours to give our horses an opportunity to graze and rest themselves. The trail, which led up on the opposite side, was discovered a short distance above us, to the south, winding up the steep and rugged sides of the acclivity.

"As we journeyed along this dell, all were again struck with admiration at the strange and fanciful figures made by the washing of the waters during the rainy season. In some places perfect walls, formed of reddish clay, were seen standing, and were they anywhere else, it would be impossible to believe that other than the hand of man formed them. The veins of which these walls were composed were of even thickness, very hard, and ran perpendicularly; and when the softer sand which had surrounded them was washed away, the veins still remained standing upright, in some places a hundred feet high, and three or four hundred in length. Columns, too, were there, and such was their appear-

ance or architectural order, and so much of chaste grandeur was there about them, that we were lost in wonder and admiration. Sometimes the breast-works, as of forts, would be plainly visible; then again the frowning turrets of some castle of the olden time. Cumbrous pillars of some mighty pile, such as is dedicated to religion or royalty, were scattered about; regularity was strangely mingled with disorder and ruin, and Nature had done it all. Niagara has been considered one of her wildest freaks, but Niagara sinks into insignificance when compared with the wild grandeur of this awful chasm—this deep, abyssmal solitude, as Carlyle would call it. Imagination carried us back to Thebes, to Palmyra, and to ancient Athens, and we could not help thinking that we were now among their ruins.

"Our passage out of this place was effected with the greatest difficulty. We were obliged to carry our rifles, holsters, and saddlebags in our hands, and in clambering up a steep pitch, one of the horses, striking his shoulders against a projecting rock, was precipitated some fifteen or twenty feet directly upon his back. All thought he must be killed by the fall; but, strangely enough, he rose immediately, shook himself, and a second effort in climbing proved more successful—the animal had not received the slightest injury.

"By the middle of the afternoon we were all safely across, after passing some five or six hours com-

pletely shut out from the world. Again we found ourselves upon the level prairie, and in looking back, after proceeding some hundred yards, not a sign of the immense chasm was visible. The plain we were then upon was at least one hundred and fifty miles in width, and the two chasms I have mentioned were the reservoirs of the heavy body of rain which falls during the wet season, and at the same time its conductors to the running streams. The prairie is undoubtedly the largest in the world, and these rents are in perfect keeping with the size of the prairie. Whether the waters which run into these hollows sink into them, or find their way to the Canadian, is a matter of uncertainty; but I am inclined to believe the latter is the case."

This description is as accurate as the language is striking. No language, indeed, can fully convey the sudden sense of surprise and fear with which this gaping waste fills one on coming upon it for the first time. It forms a stern and most characteristic feature of these dreary steppes, that climb through thousands of miles by imperceptible slopes towards the white crests of the Rocky Mountain chain.

The buffalo trails leading from every conceivable direction to centre at the far separated crossing places, are, most probably, many centuries old, and are frequently themselves worn into deep and impracticable gullies, as you approach the point of converg-

ence, by the tramp of myriad hoofs through unrecorded centuries.

Nothing more strongly indicates the recklessness of the Indian tribes, whose sole dependence is upon this animal, than the constant recurrence of such wanton and wholesale massacres as this which we now describe. Although the buffaloes, for causes at which I have hinted, are yearly becoming less accessible to them—whether their numbers be so appreciably diminished in reality or not—yet they persist, as of old, whenever they can come upon a herd, however immense, feeding in such relative position to one of these rifts as to offer the inducement of possible success, in urging the panic-stricken masses over the sudden abyss, where, bounding from point to point, their great bodies are piled in a huge hecatomb of slaughter.

Next to this, in wholesale wantonness, among the methods of hunting buffalo peculiar to their Indian foes, is the "Prairie Surround." The widely-scattered line of the Surround, enclosing some valley containing a herd, is rapidly closed up by the yelling warriors composing it, who drive the frightened animals from its circumference, urging towards a centre, where, precipitated in the headlong crush upon each other, the helpless mass sways, bellowing —while, amidst the dust-clouds of their collision, the forms of the warriors, who have leaped from their horses upon the backs of the buffaloes, may be dimly

seen treading the horned tumult with fierce gestures, and wielding the long lance as a rope-dancer does his balance-pole, with the slight difference, that with nearly every step they thrust its sharp point down through joint and marrow, between the spine and skull of some new victim, whose shaggy back they have but pressed in passing with their moccasined feet. Thousands are thus slaughtered in a few moments.

This scene, as weird and wild as it is real, tames, by contrast, all the most daring adventures of the more civilized and wary sportsman.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### PANTHERS, AND OTHER FELINES.

Mr. Audubon and Dr. Bachman, the editors of the new work on the "Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America," entirely discredit what they call "the stories" of the boldness of the wild-cat in attacking larger animals, men, or even children. I agree that caution is a highly commendable trait in the character of the naturalist, but it may carry him into absurdities too. What is here asserted may be true enough of such persecuted feeble specimens of these animals as may be met with occasionally, lurking

still about the borders of swamps in the old states, and even at no great distance from some of the southern cities; but that the wild-cat did, and does still, in remote localities, and during the rutting season, attack men with a prompt and formidable fierceness, there is abundant evidence.

I have spoken of that salutary effect which the terror of the formidable rifle has gradually impressed upon such creatures in the progress of civilization; but the frontier settlements furnish many indubitable instances of their natural ferocity. Indeed, I have myself heard from the lips of some of the compeers of Boone, in the settlement of Kentucky, relations of personal encounters held by themselves on unexpected meetings with creatures of this feline family, for which they were unprepared, and from which they came off terribly mutilated.

I remember particularly one instance in which the wild-cat was met by the narrator in the narrow path which led from his cabin to the spring. The hardy hunter, though he had no weapon upon him but a common belt or sheath-knife, which he always carried, met his assailant with that, and although he was fearfully wounded in the struggle, and would, undoubtedly, have had his bowels torn out but for the partial protection which his stout buckskin dress afforded him, yet he succeeded in despatching it with this small weapon.

The venerable soldier showed me the plain scar of

wounds from its claws and teeth upon his person. All corroborative circumstances which family reminiscences and the character of the man furnished, admitted no room for a doubt in this case, and left me more inclined to believe the many anecdotes of the same kind, which are as familiar to men of the south-west as household words.

There can be no question that the civilized white man, with the aid of the destructive fire-arms which he wields, when he chooses to assert his supremacy on the physical world, is able to overawe and subdue the most untameable brutes, utterly changing their relations to himself by his presence and his will.

The editors of the "Quadrupeds of America" give, in the following short anecdote, an illustration to the point:—

"During a botanical excursion to the Edista river, our attention was attracted by the barking of a small terrier at the foot of a tree. On looking up, we observed a wild-cat, about twenty feet from the ground, and at least three times the size of the dog, of whom he did not appear to be much afraid. He seemed to have a greater dread of man, however, than of this diminutive specimen of the canine race, and leaped from the tree when we drew near."

Yet with all the timidity this anecdote is intended to illustrate, the wild-cat, from its desperate fighting and cunning, affords a very exciting sport to the hunter. When overtaken by the dogs, several of

them are frequently killed by it, and Mr. Audubon gives some instances of its subtlety in eluding pursuit which would do credit to Reynard himself. One of them is, that he makes for some half-dried swamp or pond, and runs into the most sticky clay, seeming to be aware that the covering with which his legs would be defended when he came out would prevent the scent being deposited from his feet, and dull the trail—a shrewd conjecture, but not, as I think, particularly plausible, for in a few bounds the mire would be rubbed off the soles of his feet, from which alone the scent is emitted, and leave him badly off as ever.

But I know hundreds of well authenticated instances in which the cougar or panther attacked the early hunters, springing upon them as readily from ambush as they would have done upon a deer.

I should not feel authorized to mention any incident of the many I have had related to me, as entitled to stand among the facts of natural history, were it not that in my own personal experience I have so frequently witnessed such, that I am compelled to allow some of them a weight proportioned to their authority.

In an excursion towards the Rocky Mountains, I met nearly all our most formidable animals under the most varied circumstances of sudden collision. On this expedition we saw several skins and two living specimens of the puma, which is yet unrecognised by any American naturalist. It is evidently a tran-

sitional genus, partaking of the characters of both the lion and the cougar. It has clearly the rudimental mane and tufted tail which characterizes the former, while its habits approximate to those of the latter.

I once, while hunting around a camp on one of the head streams of the Red River, encountered a puma in a manner much resembling the instance of the wild-cat given above. I had gone out in the early morning to hunt with a comrade, and we were carelessly walking through the thick woods in Indian file, when I, who was behind, suddenly observed a creature, which I supposed to be a panther, in the act of springing from the low limb of a bending tree on my companion, who was a few feet in advance of me. I shouted in warning to him, when he sprung forward, and I fired. The ball struck the creature "on the leap" just between the eyes, and it fell at my feet. The eyes were burst from the sockets, and its yells and dying struggles were terrific. On firing another load into it these struggles ceased.

After our surprise had subsided, I examined it coolly, and found it to be entirely distinct from the cougar, both in size, which I am convinced was considerably greater (I took no measurement), and colour, which, instead of tawny, was a light roan, or mingled red and dull white. Then the head was of greater size in proportion to the body,

HUNTER ASSAILED BY A PUMA.

He was walking his horse slowly, when his attention was aroused by the rolling of a pebble or some fragment of the rock. Looking up quickly he saw the terrible brute crouching above him.—Page 365.

and the rudiments of a mane and tufted tail were sufficiently distinctive. I regret that I was not more careful at the time, for my measurements might have substantiated a new species.

A hunter attached to Sir William Drummond Stewart's expedition was assailed by a puma leaping down upon him from off the face of a bluff as he rode beneath. He was walking his horse slowly, when his attention was aroused by the rolling down of a pebble or some fragment of rock. Looking up quickly, the terrible brute was crouching above him, with ears laid back close upon its head, and he saw the wavy stir of the tail in the grass and brambles above. To whip out his holster was the act of an instant, and he fired into its face as the yellow glare of those eyes was almost against his own in the descent of its leap. He was considerably torn by its claws in the death-struggle, but the heavy ball of his holster had pierced its skull.

But what is more to the point, we saw several skins of these creatures, which had been killed near San Antonio de Bexar, in Texas, which is a very old Spanish town; yet, on the most careful inquiry, we learned from the hunters that they were quite as cowardly and averse to attacking man as the cougars, which yet linger in the swamps of the Mississippi, the pine woods of the Carolinas, or along the course of our western rivers, are known to be.

The secret of this is, that the creatures we met on

the remote waters of the Red River, where the hunter's rifle had probably never been heard, were in fact living in entire unconsciousness of its formidable prognostics and accompaniments.

I had also an adventure once with the ocelot, which fully illustrates the progress this sort of intimidation has made in altering our relations to such creatures.

The ocelot, which is, next to the common house-cat, the base of the felines, and has always been set down in old books of natural history as, in proportion to its size, one of the most incorrigibly fierce of its tribe, and which may still with truth be called the most untameable, as it is the most beautiful of all, yet showed itself to be even more timid than I in a sudden rencontre.

I was hunting with a friend near his ranche, on the San Antonio River, one morning. The two untrained dogs which accompanied us soon ran off far enough ahead down the course of the heavily timbered river bottom. We were walking through a field which had been opened into the timber, and which being now uncultivated, was fringed by a thick briar-path. As we approached this, some creature sprang up from its outer edge, where it had probably been sunning itself, and we heard it rattling away into the adjacent forest, which at this place was below where we stood.

On looking down over the top of the thicket, we saw the beautifully mottled form of an ocelot, cling-

ing to the trunk of a large cotton-wood tree, some ten feet from its base, with its striped face turned back over its shoulders, curiously regarding us. It was in short point-blank range, and I immediately fired. It dropped out of view, and when I forced my way through the thicket and reached the foot of the tree it had disappeared. There was a large hollow in the foot of the tree, into which we supposed the creature had fallen, for I felt sure of my aim.

On looking down, I saw it extended along the bottom, apparently dead. I was anxious to obtain its skin, and, accordingly, after reloading my rifle, I, by a sideway movement, pushed my arm, shoulders, and head with difficulty into the narrow gap, in hope that I should be able to reach and draw it out. My head had scarcely been introduced before a pair of flaming eyes looked up into mine from the darkness, apparently within a few inches. I, of course, struggled out as quickly as possible, under the impression that the creature I supposed to have been killed was only stunned. I put the muzzle of my rifle down the hollow and fired, as I thought, directly between the glowing eyes. When the smoke was dissipated, I ventured to look in again, and there lay the same creature, as I supposed, stretched, and still in the old position.

I now determined on a second trial to draw it out. I had forced in arms, shoulder, and head, so far as they would go, when suddenly the fiery eyes made

their appearance again, so close to mine that they seemed almost to burn them. I scuffled desperately to extricate my person, for the idea of a pair of long white claws stuck into my face was not the most pleasant that could be conceived. I was just in time; for, as I drew my face out, plump against it came the heavy crush of soft fur, with a strong body behind it, and I was prostrated on my back.

I was roused from the stun and fright together by the loud shouts of my companion, who was too much convulsed with laughter to be able to shoot the oceolet, which we saw going off through the woods at full speed. On examination, I found the roots of the great tree had been hollowed far under and beyond the line of vision, and concluded that the shot into the hollow had missed aim, as I found the first animal dead which I had seen lying from the first. We now called the dogs, which soon traced the fugitive to another hollow tree, from which we smoked it down, as is the practice in taking hares when they are "treed," and shot it as it sprang out. We found this to be the dam, while the first was a cub just grown.

It is a somewhat curious commentary upon the nature of these animals, that the cub was found to have been so badly torn by the teeth of the dam as to render its skin useless. I suppose its falling into the den so suddenly and unusually, was the cause of this unnatural act on the part of the mother, who

mistook it for some assailant. I have no doubt I should have been badly mutilated by this creature had the incident occurred anywhere but in this neighbourhood, where it had been thoroughly initiated into the terrors of gunpowder and the rifle.

The genus Lynx is very celebrated in those classic and European legends, which, under the name of facts, have come down to us as Natural History. The metaphor in which a "lynx's eye" is represented as being able to pierce through stone walls, is familiar to our childhood. From very ancient times it has been known through curious and varied associations. It is a sort of anomaly, neither canine nor feline strictly, but holding an intermediate position both in grade and notoriety. With us, north or south, everybody has heard of the *Lynx rufus* (or common wild-cat), even though some may have identified it with the Canada lynx, and others, puzzled by its varied marking and size, may have called it by sundry names, such as catamount, &c. In truth, naturalists have been sadly perplexed with regard to the true place of this genus, and we should not wonder that the common people of all countries should be no less so. It is unquestionably the transition species from the more defined genera, felis and canis, and consequently, as a sub-genus, its definitions have become more involved. In the dental arrangement there is only the slight variation from that of the felines of one molar less on each side

above; for the rest, they have shorter bodies in proportion to the length of the legs, and shorter tails. Their resemblance to the genus canis (to which those of lupus and vulpes are sub-genera), seems to be less defined. They approach the dog, not by very distinct stages of transition, through both these subgenera. They live more like the fox, on the ground, and approach its associations more in choice of localities and manner of taking its prey. They resemble the dog in its fleetness, and more particularly in its acute sense of smell, which no doubt gave rise to the legend about their being able to see through a stone wall, the acuteness of one sense being vulgarly substituted for that of another. But the true physical characteristic which distinguishes the lynx from all other genera, is the tuft or pencil of hair which appears, when it is in full pelage, on the points of the ears. This is the most prominent character of the genus, which I have left to be considered last, because it varies so much with the shedding time and seasons, that it has been the most fruitful source of confusion in classifying the animal. At one time it is long, and at another scarcely visible; hence careless observers have insisted upon a most complicated subdivision of the genus.

Certainly this difficulty has been very naturally increased, by the extraordinary variations in markings or colour which are peculiar to the *Lynx rufus;* although the Canada lynx is more strictly defined.

Rafenesque even confounded it into fifteen varieties; and when a naturalist is led into such errors, it is not astonishing that the popular judgment should make mistakes. Indeed, I myself for a long time held the opinion, based not only on the varied size, markings, length of tail and ear-tufts, of the specimens which I had either killed or seen others kill, but also upon a patient survey of thousands of skins at the fur warehouses in St. Louis, that the catamount, or common wild-cat, was a cross upon the oceolet and Canada lynx. The oceolet is a true feline. Indeed, all these singular variations have had their effect on me; for I had seen the tail from one inch to four, and the pelage not alone faintly banded, but mottled, through such regular transitions, from plain olive-brown to distinct markings, and then to the very peculiar black and unmistakeable rosette which belongs to the pelage of the oceolet, that I could not help thinking that the Canada lynx and the oceolet may have perpetuated a middle species, partaking, as well in habits as in markings, the characteristics of the two. The authors of the "Quadrupeds of America," however, take a different view of the subject. They certainly bring up many formidable instances to show that they are right; and until I have spent as many years as they have in personal dedication to such investigations, I shall fully accept their nomenclature. They remark in general terms concerning the "pelage:"—

"There are, however, at all seasons of the year, even in the same neigbourhood, strongly marked varieties, and it is difficult to find two individuals precisely alike.

"Some specimens are broadly marked with fulvus under the throat, whilst in others the throat as well as the chin is gray. In some the stripes on the back and spots along the sides are very distinctly seen, whilst in others they are scarcely visible, and the animal is grayish-brown above, with a dark dorsal stripe.

"There are six species of lynx known to the old world, and, as they say, only two to North America! I am surely right with regard to the old world; but whether they are, upon this knotty point, right as to this, we will leave for future investigation to determine. Be scientific truth on which side of the controversy it may, the animal itself is a very interesting one, and intimately associated with the legend and character, not only of the pioneers, but of the older population of our wide country, for it is found everywhere, from the middle to the extreme southern and southwestern limits of settlement. The Canada lynx, which is so frequently identified with it, extends from the mountains of Pennsylvania to the northern districts of Canada." With regard to the habits of the *Lynx rufus* the authors of the "Quadrupeds of America" say:—

"The general appearance of this species conveys the

idea of a degree of ferocity which cannot with propriety be considered as belonging to its character, although it will, when at bay, show its sharp teeth, and with outstretched claws and infuriated despair repel the attacks of either man or dog, sputtering the while and rolling its eyes like the common cat. It is, however, generally cowardly when attacked, and always flies from its pursuers if it can; and although some anecdotes have been related to us of the strength, daring, and fierceness of the animal, such as its having been known to kill, at different times, a sheep, a full grown doe, attack a child in the woods, &c., yet in all the instances that have come under our own notice, we have found it very timid, and always rather inclined to beat a retreat than to make an attack on an animal larger than a hare or young pig."

Dr. Bachman, associate editor of the "Quadrupeds of America," describes with some minuteness and reality the most common mode of hunting the wild-cat by daylight, when undertaken in set fashion by the southern gentry, with all the appliances of "hound and horn," &c.; but his chase is wound up by the shooting of the exhausted animal by some one of the huntsmen.

In a southern fox-chase there can be nothing more unorthodox than such an expenditure of ammunition; for the hunters would have been somewhat dangerously furious, and the hounds themselves ready to

tear in pieces the unlucky marksman who should have dared to interpose between their heated ferocity and a legitimate consummation of the chase, in "the death!" But the wild-cat injures the dogs so much, that after losing a few of the most valued leaders of the pack in the bloody death-struggle with this savagely formidable creature, the huntsmen soon learn to differ from our friend Dr. Bachman's opinion concerning its courage, and become very cautious how they run the risk of having their dogs overtake it. They easily tell, from the cry of the hounds, when it is becoming exhausted, and has reached its short doublings; and as by this time they have enjoyed the excitement of a long chase, they can very well afford to listen to the dictates of prudence in shooting it, as described.

The dogs used in a night-hunt are not the full-blooded hounds of the open chase. A cross of the fox or stag-hound upon the fiercer, snapping, wire-haired cur, which seems to be peculiarly the dog of the negro, makes a far more swift, though not so long-winded or so sure a hunter; and, from its strength and activity, is considered a much better fighter than the aristocratic hound, which is owned solely by the master. Indeed, the half-breeds of this and various other crosses are almost exclusively used for the chase and destruction of the carnivorous animals throughout this country; the game "full-bloods," which, when heated by their long chases, habitually

rush in, closing instantly with their quarry, when it has been brought to bay, suffer terribly when it turns out to be wild-cat, panther, or bear; and if permitted to chase these animals, the pack is soon exterminated by them.

It is curious to observe the instant change in the appearance of all dogs used in the chase, on striking the trail of any one of these animals, but more especially that of the wild-cat or panther. The hair "roughs," as the hunters term it, that is, stands on end over the back and tail, and their cry becomes a sort of eager growl. The drivers understand these signs well, and when beating for deer or fox they immediately call the dogs off the dangerous scent.

As a hunter the bay lynx exhibits a good deal of cunning and sagacity—quite as much, it would appear, as Reynard himself. Dr. Bachman gives some curious relations upon this head. One incident which occurred at the plantation of Dr. Desel, in South Carolina, is worth giving. It seems that "the drove of geese were nightly lodged near the house, in an enclosure, which was rendered apparently safe by a very high fence. As an additional security, several watch-dogs were let loose about the premises, besides an excellent pack of hounds, which by an occasional bark or howl during the night sounded the alarm in case any marauder, whether biped or quadruped, approached. Notwithstanding these precautions, a goose disappeared almost every night, and no trace

of the ingress or egress of the robber could be discovered. Slow in attaching suspicion to his servants, the doctor waited for time and watchfulness to solve the mystery. At length the feathers and other remains of his geese were discovered in a marsh about a quarter of a mile from the house, and strong suspicion was fastened on the wild-cat! Still, as he came at odd hours of the night, all attempts to kill or shoot him proved for a time unavailing. One morning, however, he came about daylight, and having captured a good fat goose, was traced by the keen noses of the hounds."

The hounds tracked him up, and he was finally shot; but his subtle ingoings and outcomings sound to us very like the German stories of the witch or weir-wolf. It was surely ticklish walking, though his toes be padded, for the wary plunderer amid so many foes. But his astuteness and dexterity are quite as remarkable in those wild wood forays, which the editors of the "Quadrupeds" have had an opportunity of witnessing. Such examples are confirmed by my own experience.

When this animal discovers a flock of wild turkeys, he will generally follow them at a little distance for some time, and after having ascertained the direction in which they are proceeding, make a rapid detour, and concealing himself behind a fallen tree, or in the lower branches of some leafy maple, patiently wait in ambush until the birds approach, when he suddenly

springs on one of them, if near enough, and with one bound secures it. We once, while resting on a log in the woods, on the banks of the Wabash river, perceived two wild turkey-cocks at some distance below us, under the bank near the water, pluming and picking their feathers; on a sudden one of them fled across the river, and the other we saw struggling in the grasp of a wild-cat, which almost instantly dragged it up the bank into the woods and made off. On another occasion, we observed another individual of this species, almost nine miles from Charleston, in pursuit of a covey of partridges (*Ortyx Virginiana*); so intent was the cat upon its prey, that it passed within ten steps of us, as it was making a circle to get in advance, and in the path of the birds; its eyes were constantly fixed on the covey, and it stealthily concealed itself behind a log it expected the birds to pass. In a second attempt, the maurauder succeeded in capturing one of the partridges, when the rest, in great fright, flew and scattered in all directions.

The Canada lynx is something larger than the bay lynx, and though more formidable looking, is not so fierce, bold, or restless. Indeed, it seems to be quite remarkable for a shy timidity, even when far removed from the neighbourhood of man. It is not mottled as the bay lynx, but is gray above, a little clouded with irregular dark spots, and lighter beneath. It is well protected against the cold of its northern home by its long fur. It is very dexterous in capturing the

grouse, hares, squirrels, and other small creatures, which constitute its habitual prey. It has even been represented as having killed a deer, though I conjecture it must have been a wounded one. It is true there is less known of its habits than of those of the southern species; but, on the whole, I am disposed to regard it as a less enterprising and therefore less interesting species.

Indeed, it is by no means through the character of this gray northern animal that the wide-spread notoriety of the wild-cat, in connection with border life, has obtained in this country. It is to the more fierce, predatory, and pugnacious temperament of its tawny and mottled brother of the south, that the family reputation is mainly owing. The panther or cougar, with even its greater size and more formidable attributes, is not more entirely identified with our wildest legends, scenes, and adventures, than is this bay lynx.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### CAPTAIN DAN HENRIE—HIS ADVENTURE WITH WOLVES.

THE escape of Captain Dan Henrie at Encarnacion is well known to his countrymen. This reckless and daring ranger probably passed through a greater number of perilous and singular adventures than any

other man of the same age in the service. Though one of the most light-hearted mortals that the sun ever smiled upon, yet he had a careless knack of getting into desperate scrapes on every possible occasion, and then fought his way out again with the most dashing gallantry.

He was too kindly and generous to quarrel with his own people; but he had a hatred of the Mexicans and Indians, only too common among those who are brought into collision with either on the borders. His hatred of the Mexicans was amusingly bitter and contemptuous while you listened to him talking of them; but when this hatred came to be expressed in action, it was of the most savage and deadly character. At Encarnacion, when the little band found themselves surrounded by the heavy masses of Minon's cavalry, the proposition, which, we believe, originated with Cassius M. Clay, was made, to stand to their arms and fight it out with the Mexicans to the last gasp, in spite of the disparity of numbers. Lieutenant Dan, who was then their guide, seconded this proposition warmly, representing that they could hope for nothing but bad faith if they surrendered to the Mexicans. He reminded them of Goliad, and the Meir surrender, and of his own experience in the last case; showing, to his own satisfaction, that the resolution of fighting their way through was the only possible chance of safety or honourable death left them.

His knowledge of the Mexican character, as well as his hatred of them, were fully displayed in this advice. Dan knew perfectly that there would be no chance for him, for he had already been recognised by several Mexicans, whose faces he remembered well; the surrender, therefore, placed him in a desperate predicament. He knew that whatever faith they might keep with the other prisoners, they would keep none with him, although his safety had been provided for in an express stipulation of the terms of surrender.

He saw those men who had recognised him whispering among themselves, and felt sure that so soon as the commanding officers had retired and left them in charge of the guard he would be shot from the ranks. It fortunately occurred that, when they were starting, Minon and his staff was moving in the same direction down the lines of the Mexican force. Colonel Gaines rode a very swift and beautiful mare. Dan rode up to his side and whispered the discovery he had made, his fears, and his determination! Gaines at once, with a generous promptness, proposed that he should take his mare to make the attempt upon, as her high-blooded metal would distance any Mexican horse with ease. This was precisely what Dan desired, and he eagerly accepted the offer. The officers had not yet been deprived of their pistols, and the holsters of Gaines remained on the saddle.

The mare was very spirited and fiery, and Dan

slyly roused up all her mettle by touching her with the spur. She began to pitch and plunge, and throw out her heels. This compelled the escort, or rather guard, which rode on either side of the prisoners, to open their line occasionally. Dan kept it up for some minutes, so as to remove all suspicion, and watched his chance, until he saw the guard were beginning to become careless, and regard those unruly capers rather with amusement than otherwise. Then seeing his way open, as they moved slowly through the squadrons of green-coated cavalry, he suddenly reined up the mare in the midst of her capricolings, and plunging the spurs into her, she darted off like an arrow loosened from the bow, while he stooped, laying himself close along her side, after the manner of the Comanche Indians. A shower of balls was fired hurriedly after him, but without effect, as they all passed over him.

The plain to the foot of the mountains was very narrow just here; and he had observed, before he started, that they were opposite a road which came down a narrow valley. He made for this gap, running the gauntlet between several squadrons of cavalry before he reached its shelter. Just as he was diving into it he wheeled in his saddle, and amidst the whistling of balls, shook his clenched hand at them, and shouted back his defiance. This sudden escape caused great uproar and confusion among the Mexicans, and several hundred men started at full

speed in the pursuit; but the gallant mare soon left them all far enough behind, as she clattered with sparkling hoofs along the deep ravine. Before the first two miles had been passed, the pursuit was out of sight in the rear.

The valley road, which he had taken at hap-hazard, without the slightest idea of where it led, now opened upon a small plain of table-land, which was occupied by a hacienda of considerable extent. As he swept by in front of the buildings, he saw a number of green-coats hastily mounting, and in another moment heard the clatter of their pursuing horses coming down the road. He looked over his shoulder and saw that it was probably a foraging party of about ten lancers. The first agony was over now, and he felt sure of the game and speed of his mare, and with his usual audacity, he determined to give them something to remember him by before he took his final leave. He accordingly reined up his mare gradually, and let them gain upon him. They thought she was failing, and raised a yell of triumph as they urged their horses to yet greater exertions.

He looked behind again, and the officer, with one of his men, was now considerably in the advance, and closing rapidly upon him. He loosened a pistol from the holster. The officer was foremost, and was already shouting to him, with many "Garachoes," to surrender, when he wheeled suddenly in his saddle and shot him dead. The lancer, who was close

behind, and coming on at furious speed, attempted in vain to rein up his horse. It was too late, he was carried by the impetus of his speed within ten feet of Dan, who had by this time drawn his other pistol, with which he shot him through the head, and then galloped leisurely along, feeling sure that the remainder of his pursuers would be stopped effectually by this bloody barricade he had left across their path. He was not mistaken, for they halted there, and this was the last he saw of their green coats.

All that day long he kept the noble beast in swift motion, since at every little rancho or village he came to it would be necessary for the fugitive to make a desperate run for it, before a pursuit could be organized. The roads were filled, too, with scouting parties of the enemy, and it required all his knowledge of their sort of tactics to enable him to dodge them. He several times very narrowly avoided rushing headlong into the very midst of these advance parties. The Mexicans are usually very noisy troops, and he would hear them talking on the march in time to dodge to one side and let them pass, for he had no fancy to try the hacienda trick over again with empty pistols, since he had nothing to load them with again. He finally threw them away as so much "make-weight," that was useless to him, and embarrassing to his mare.

So he hurried on, not daring to pause a moment to rest or obtain food, until the next day, when, in a

deep wild gorge among the mountains, his gallant mare fell beneath him dead. Now came the most terrible part of this wild and remarkable adventure. He was totally without food, except what little fruit of the cactus he could gather during the day while he was skulking, for he only ventured to travel at night now. This was scarcely enough to keep body and soul together; while his clothes soon became torn to pieces, and hung about his bleeding limbs like tattered ribbons. He, however, still continued making his way steadfastly in the direction of General Wool's camp. At last some of his scouts picked the poor fellow up when almost speechless with thirst and hunger; he was yet feebly reeling along like a ghostly and haggard drunkard. This affair very properly got him his promotion to a captaincy.

I shall now relate another of Captain Henrie's adventures. Dan, whose excellence as a guide was well known to Captain M'Cullough, was despatched by him, along with three others of the troop, on a scouting expedition, towards the head waters of the Nueces.

Dan and his companions had reached the foot of the mountains in which the western branch of the Nueces takes rise, without meeting any other incident than those which are common to prairie travel. Here they formed their camp, and as they had yet discovered no signs of Indians, it was concluded that they would take each his own course the next day, and after traversing as much ground as possible, return to camp and report;

and if it should then appear that no sign had been discovered by any of them, it was agreed they should spend several days in a regular buffalo-hunting frolic, as these animals seemed to abound greatly in this region.

Accordingly they were under weigh early, pursuing their sport in various directions. Dan travelling in a leisurely sort of a way had, without observing it, followed up the west branch of the Nueces, until he now found himself at its very head-spring. In front of him a bold and broken mountain stood out somewhat from the chain, at the foot of which he had been riding all the morning. The front of this mountain was almost a square perpendicular, and looked as if it had been cleft from crest to foot by a bolt of thunder. The huge masses of stone with which it seemed built were seamed with a sort of eccentric regularity, and evergreens were rooted along these seams. As the eye descended, these masses became more broken, and assumed a fantastic resemblance to the lines and forms of Gothic architecture in decay; while from the prairie level sprung a broken arch, one side of which was perfect in outline, and the other concealed by the overhanging masses of evergreen shrubs. All off to the left, and beyond this remarkable mountain, seemed an interminable stretch of rolling prairies, over which, amidst clumps of cactus, were scattered herds of deer, mustangs, and buffaloes, in view at once.

Dan has not much poetry in him, but he could not

help being both astonished and enchanted by the strange, wild loveliness of this scene. He slid from his saddle, and stood leaning against it for only a moment or two of wrapt contemplation, when the habitual instinct of watchfulness, peculiar to the ranger, caused him to change his position, and turn his head. As he did so, he perceived one of the droves of mustangs (wild horses) moving slowly towards him. They were a long way off, and there appeared nothing peculiar about them; but it served to remind him that he had a short time before seen the unshod tracks of horses and mules moving at a gallop, or that, though they might be nothing more than mustangs, yet the simple fact of their going at a gallop, was in itself suspicious of another fact or so—either that they were the tracks of Indian horses and mules, or of mustangs that had been chased or otherwise frightened by them; so that whatever of enchantment there may have been for him in the scene, it now gave place quickly to caution, and his head turned rapidly from side to side, with the habitual manner of the old spy.

His eye now and then fell upon the advancing drove, but not with any consciously defined suspicion. At length they disappeared slowly down a long valley, like the sway of the prairie undulations, and were out of sight so long that he had quite forgotten them, when suddenly they appeared again on this side, moving directly towards him, at a swift gallop. He bounded

into his saddle as quick as thought, supposing that possibly one or two Indians who were mustang-hunting, had lain in wait for this herd, in the deep grass of that prairie valley, and were now chasing them with the lasso. He urged his horse behind one of the many clumps of cactus around him, with the intention of lying in wait to give these dusky wild horse-hunters a trial for their scalps as they went past him.

As he changed his position, the figures which were approaching became more distinctly defined against the back-ground of the sky, for they were descending towards him. He saw, what sent his heart into his throat, that each animal had an Indian slung along its side, by one hand and foot, holding to either horn of the saddle! This is a common trick of theirs in approaching an enemy by day-light, on the prairies; and it is difficult of detection at a distance, by the most experienced eye, as they ride close together, and no part of the body is shown above the outline of the horse.

Dan was off in a twinkling! The tables were very suddenly turned; for instead of taking a scalp or two himself, as he had expected, it would now require the best he knew to save his own. It was well that he could trust his horse, for they had got so close to him that his escape at all must be a matter of sheer speed —he must run away from them or be run through by them. So soon as they saw him start, the rascals had wheeled up into their saddles again, and yelled their

war-whoop like exulting devils. He glanced furtively over his shoulder and saw that they were spreading out into the prairie with the intention of hemming him in against the mountains. He instantly perceived that his only chance of escape was a desperate run for an elbow of the chain, which, if he could reach and turn first, he thought would secure his scalp for the present, as around it the stream became heavily timbered, and he knew they would not follow him into it for fear they might come upon his friends.

It was a tremendous race, for the Indians knew the advantage as well as he; and Dan vows that his long curly hair began to straighten and lift his cap on its ends before he reached the point, they pushed him so close and hard. By the narrowest chance of fortune, he succeeded in getting by before they surrounded him, but not until he had taken his cap off and waved it, as he shouted back at them in derisive triumph, and then darted beneath the shades of the friendly wood. They left him here as he expected; but as this was most evidently a dangerous neighbourhood, he concluded it would be safest not to tarry here, but get out of it as fast as possible, for there was no telling what new whim might take these fellows when they had spread around on his trail and found him to be alone. So away he went through the woods for five or six miles without halting.

The hurry and necessities of his flight had taken him off his course back to the rendezvous of his com-

panions. He now first discovered this as he emerged from the timber upon the prairie again, and found himself far enough away from the course of the stream. He paused but for a moment, to collect himself and try to recover the true idea of his direction. Thinking he had it, he urged his horse into a swift run again. This was kept up for several hours, until night began to close around him, and his horse to give unmistakeable indications that he must have rest before he went much further. He came at last to a small rivulet trickling along a deep, rough cut, and, as he supposed, in the direction of the west branch of the Nueces. He had passed the camp far enough, he knew, but this would set him right if he followed it up when daybreak came. So he selected a small piece of meadow-ground which was covered with musquit grass, and well protected from view by the great clusters of cactus which surrounded it on three sides. Here he stripped his faithful horse and turned him loose to graze, and then taking for supper a hearty draught of water, threw himself upon his blanket to sleep.

He had lost his provision wallet in the chase, and it was more than he dare venture upon to shoot game, for fear of betraying his hiding-place; and though hungry enough, he was fain this time "to go to bed supperless." He thought of home before sleep came, and wished himself there most heartily, that he might attack the well-stocked pantry, the

contents of which danced in tantalizing visions before him during the whole night. This was too much a common predicament, however, to make any very strong impression upon him otherwise.

He was mounted and off very early the next morning, and was by no means delighted to perceive that his horse was considerably jaded by the yesterday's hard work and the somewhat narrow commons of the night. However, he moved on now with something less of a hurry, as there were no indications of pursuit apparent. Following the rivulet, he soon reached the west branch, and turned up this with a brisker movement, encouraged by the cheerful hope of soon rejoining his companions and finding them safe. In an hour he was in sight of the ground, and put his horse into a swift gallop in his eagerness to pass over the interval quickly. On coming up, he saw, instead of his comrades, the dead body of an Indian warrior lying across the very ashes of their camp-fire, all gashed and hewn with bowie-knife cuts. All around the earth was deeply broken up, with the evidences of a desperate hand to hand struggle. The breech of a rifle, which he recognised, and a number of arrows, with a broken lance and shield, were scattered around. He felt a choking sensation, and his blood ran cold at this sight.

His comrades had been surprised, no doubt, by the same party which had pursued him, but with what result it was impossible for him to tell certainly,

though he had little choice but to believe and fear the worst. Amid the multitude of the tracks of unshod horses, he could distinguish the few tracks of their shod horses. There was no trace of their bodies in the hasty survey he had time to make, and it seemed very strange that this dead warrior should be left behind, so contrary to their well-known custom. He followed the trail for some time, with great caution, but could make no discovery, except a great deal of blood on the ground, until towards noon, when rising the comb of a steep ridge, he looked down into the plain below upon a large body of Indians, encamped about a mile distant.

This was a startling sight, and they perceived him at the same moment. Now he felt he would have indeed to run for his life. One glance, as he wheeled, was sufficient to show him warriors mounting the horses of his friends! He did not dread a race with the horses of the Indians so much, because his horse was more than a match for the best of theirs; but the horses of his comrades were as swift, and in every sense as good as his—now they were to be turned against him! He cursed the rashness that had induced him to follow up their trail, but this was no time to pause for regrets: he was off, down the hill, at the best speed his horse, already somewhat fagged, could raise. All depended upon getting back to the timber and losing them! He could hear their pursuing yells distinctly for a moment, and this was no

syren's music to draw him back! He had a good mile the start, but that was no great matter, if, as he supposed, their horses were fresher than his own. He had not time now to feel any alarm, but only that there was hot work before him, and he had it to attend to. His object was to get out of sight as soon as possible, for he gained a great deal by compelling them to run on his trail. He strained his horse tremendously, and succeeded, for when the sudden burst of their voices came from time to time, proving that they had reached the comb of the ridge, he looked back, and could not see it or them.

He felt a little less tight about the heart now, and had time to think something of his best course. It seemed a forlorn chance for an escape: he was above six miles from timber. He suddenly remembered that he had observed, for several days past, a heavy smoke off towards the south, and looking now in that direction, saw it filling the whole horizon with gloomy masses, which seemed to be rising but a few miles off. Observing that it was not very high, it instantly occurred to him in his extremity—for he felt sure from the action of his horse, that he would not last much longer in the hard run before them—that the safest course for him would be the most desperate, and this was to make directly for the approaching line of this fire, and take his chance of being able to force his way through it alive. With such a barrier between himself and the Indians, he was

safe. Acting upon this stern and strange alternative, he urged his horse steadily towards the fire. It was not long before he met the dark advance guard of the smoke, as it rolled along the grass, and rode beneath its stifling shelter, the fire being yet a mile off.

He was now securely enough out of sight of the Indians, and springing from his horse, proceeded to prepare himself for a trial of the fiery sea. He cut his blanket into pieces, with one of which he blindfolded his horse; another he tied in a loose bag about the lower part of its head, enveloping the mouth and nostrils. He then enveloped his own face in a loose visor of the same material. The blanket was coarse, and let in air enough to barely sustain life for a short time, while it kept out the smoke. He could hear the yells of his pursuers seemingly close at hand. He was now in utter darkness, and mounting quickly again, headed his horse directly for the fire. On he went, not knowing where; the reins were tightened, and the lash and spur applied with the energy of desperation.

Hotter and hotter the air became, but on he careered, heady and blind. The fire has struck him with a roaring surge! His hair flames crisply, and the flesh of his body seems to be burning! The frantic and panting horse attempts to shy: but no; the fierceness of the agony has turned that rider's arm and will to iron!

It *cannot* shy—the poor horse! On! on! scorching through the stifling blaze! A few bounds more, and the terrific surges are past! The fresh air has met him! He tore the envelope from his face and leaped from the staggering horse upon the charred hot ground. The blanket is torn away from its mouth, and the animal begins to revive quickly, though it shivers and can scarcely stand for the mortal terror. He is safe! He has accomplished an unparalleled feat!

He hears faintly above the crackling and roar of the retiring flames a howl of triumph from his pursuers, who imagine they have driven him into the fire, and that he is burnt, horse and all. He makes a feeble attempt to answer them defiantly, but can scarcely hear his own voice. Stunned, and gasping to recover the use of their almost stifled lungs, he and his horse stand, side by side, upon that blackened plain, without moving a step for more than an hour.

But the perils of the day were by no means passed. Before him, as far as the eye could reach, there was only one charred, level, smouldering waste, which had to be crossed before he could reach water, for which both himself and horse were now almost perishing. He started on at last, taking his course at random, for one seemed to his bewildered sense about as good as another. He did not ride at first, but mercifully led his poor horse, until the heat of the ground and the still smouldering stubs of grass

became insufferable to his feet, and then he turned to mount. He now, for the first time, looked at the animal carefully, and to his horror saw that nearly every hair upon its body was gone, and the bare skin was badly scorched.

This was dreadful enough—but water! water! he must have, or they would both die. He sprang into the saddle, and urged the wretched creature along with the last energies of his sinking life. In an hour he had begun to grow dizzy, and the earth swam round and round, and tossed him to and fro. Now a strange noise was about him; and as the lifting waves of the earth would almost seem to leap up into his face, he would catch glimpses of huge wolves careering on them, turning up their fiery eyes to his, and howling at him with red open mouths and lolling tongues. Suddenly his horse rushed down a steep bank, and there was a great splashing. Water! Blessed water! He tumbled from his saddle into the cold delicious fluid.

In an instant his senses had returned, and he saw himself surrounded by thirty or forty prairie wolves, some of which were swimming in the water after him, while the others sat upon the bank of the small lake, and howled their gathering cry. He struck those which were nearest with his gun barrel, and beat them off, while he had time to draw his heavy knife. One of them had seized his passive horse, who, while it was endeavouring to pull him down,

stood still and drank the long eager draughts. He split the wolf's head with his knife, and soon sent the rest back out of the water, yelling with their wounds. But those upon the bank only howled the louder, and they were answered near at hand and from afar by hundreds of others, who were swiftly gathering in at the well-known call to a banquet.

He now remembered that the wolves always collect in large numbers, to follow in the wake of a great prairie fire, and tear the carcasses of those animals that are killed; or band together to chase and drag down those that come through alive, but scorched, blinded, and staggering, as was his poor horse. They become very savage with blood, impunity, and numbers, and very few creatures which have escaped from the hungry flames can escape from their yet more ravenous jaws. The creature, at other times, is utterly contemptible for its cowardice; but he shuddered when he called to mind the dreadful stories he had heard of its fierceness on such occasions as this.

He looked at his horse; the animal was now partially refreshed, and began to be conscious of the new danger as he gazed around with staring eyeballs upon the eager and swiftly gathering crowd that howled along the bank. He snorted in affright, and lifted his head with a wildly mournful neigh, that seemed to poor Dan the most piteous sound that ever rung

CAPTAIN DAN HENRIE.

Through he trampled, and away across the prairie he flies, snorting with terror, and away, too, in pursuit swept the yelling herd of wolves.—Page 317.

upon his ear. There was some comfort, though—the horse had life enough in him to make one more run for safety.

He mounted, and after having fired his rifle, with deliberate aim, into the thickest of them, charged right through at full speed. They leaped at his feet and attempted to seize his horse's legs, but the animal was too mortally frightened for them to impede his way for an instant. Through he trampled, and away across the prairie snorting with terror, and moving with as great speed as if perfectly fresh; and away, too, in pursuit, swept the yelling herd of wolves. There were more than a hundred now, and they seemed increasing in numbers at every leap.

He fired his pistols back at them, but it made no difference; they only yelled the louder, and came on the more fiercely, while five joined their long train for each one that he had killed. If his horse should fall or give out, they would both be torn to fragments in an instant! This appalling conviction caused him to give all of eye and nerve that were left him in the mortal fright to steadying and guiding his horse, for the only hope now lay in him. He soon perceived, however, that he was leaving the pack far behind, for there is little comparison between the speed of a horse and that of the prairie wolf.

He now began to feel something of hope; and as the frantic speed of his horse placed yet a greater distance between them, the unimaginable dread

seemed to be lifting from his life. Now he could not hear their yells, and could barely distinguish, far in the rear, the long snake-like train yet moving on in the relentless chase, over the undulations of the bare plain.

Reaching, at length, a wood, Dan was at last safe; but his poor, faithful horse was utterly exhausted. He ascended a tree, and then loaded his arms in the forlorn hope of defending him if they came up. All was still as death. He ascended higher to look out for the approach of the wolves, for he had a faint hope that they had given up the chase. But, alas! his heart sank again. There they come, the long yellowish-looking train: and several large white wolves had joined them now. He knew well the tameless and pitiless ferocity of these red-eyed monsters, and felt that his noble horse must go.

Now he can hear their cry! They are in the woods. The poor horse shivers, looks back, and utters that wild and wailing neigh, as they rush upon him in a body. Dan fires down among them; but what avail is it. In a twinkling his gallant beast is down, and has been torn to atoms.

Now they lie panting around the foot of the tree, with their fiery eyes turned wistfully up at him, for the horse had been only a mouthful a-piece. Whenever he makes a movement they rise with eager yells, and leap up towards him as if to meet his fall.

Dan says, that in the utter and dreadfully hopeless desperation of his position now, a grotesque sort of humour possessed him of a sudden, and he commenced deliberately firing down at the red glaring eyeballs of the white wolves, and would laugh with glee when he saw the creature tumble over with a shrill death-cry; and then the whole pack rush on it and tear it into shreds in an instant, with gnashing cries.

He amused himself in this way for an hour, and made them tear to pieces every white wolf that had joined the chase. This sport delighted him so much, that he became careless, and narrowly escaped falling. He only saved himself by dropping his gun, which they seized, and tore its stock before they discovered it was not eatable. Darkness was coming on, and they seemed not in the least disposed to go; and he felt that he must tumble off from the faintness of hunger and fatigue if he was compelled to spend another hour in that tree without food. He had become entirely reckless now, and loaded his pistols, determined, if he must fall, to bring death with him for some more of them.

Suddenly he heard a distant yelling on the prairie, like that which had sounded so dreadfully behind his flight. The wolves sprang to their feet in a body, and with pricked ears listened. He looked out towards the prairie, and could faintly discover a large buffalo bull plunging along over the plain, surrounded

by a great herd of wolves, who were tearing him at every jump. He could even hear the low bellowing of the creature's agony. Another victim! and his thirsty guardians started to join the chase. One after another they went, while those who stayed behind would turn their heads to look back wistfully at him, and whine and lick their dry chaps. When the chase came in sight, though, off they started in a body with savage yells. He fired his pistols after them in farewell, and killed one of the hindmost, while another, with a broken shoulder, kept on yelling with the pack.

He knew he would be safe now if he could get a fire kindled before they returned, if they did so at all. Before they were out of sight he had reached the ground, and with trembling eagerness proceeded to light a fire with the help of his flint and steel, which every ranger carries. He soon had a great fire blazing, and then cutting a piece from the last wolf he had killed, proceeded to roast it for food. When he had eaten, he felt so much refreshed that he could now proceed to make provision for the night's rest. He gathered a great deal of dried wood, and built a large fire in a circle about the spot he had selected to sleep upon. The wolves came back in about an hour after he had finished his arrangements for the night; but he now felt perfectly secure, for though he could see their hungry eyes shining all round the outside of the circle, and they kept up a continued

howling all night long, he laid himself down and slept soundly until morning.

When he waked up the wolves were all gone but one or two, crunching at the bones of yesterday's feast. He shot one of them with his pistol, and made a breakfast off it. He picked up the gun, and found that though the stock was much torn, it could still be used. He now took his course, and started on foot for the settlements. After a week of almost incredible suffering, he got in safe, and saw nothing more of the wolves or of his comrades, who are thought to have been carried off prisoners, and afterwards murdered by the Indians on their attempting to escape.

Dan was sick of a fever for several weeks at Corpus Christi after he got in, and raved incessantly about wolves.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE SKATER AND THE WOLVES.

Some of my readers may have already heard of the remarkable adventure with wolves on the ice related by Mr Whitehead. The story has made so strong an impression on me, that I cannot resist the temptation of preserving it here, along with the previous narrative, as incidental to our "Wild Scenes," and

one of the most effective stories ever given about wolves.

"During the winter of 1844, being engaged in the northern part of Maine," he observes, "I had much leisure to devote to the wild sports of a new country. To none of these was I more passionately addicted than to skating. The deep and sequestered lakes of this state, frozen by the intense cold of a northern winter, present a wide field to the lovers of this pastime. Often would I bind on my skates and glide away up the glittering river, and wind each mazy streamlet that flowed beneath its fetters on toward the parent ocean. Sometimes I would follow the track of a fox or otter, and run my skate along the mark he had left with his dragging tail until the trail would enter the woods. Sometimes these excursions were made by moonlight; and it was on one of these latter occasions that I had a rencontre which even now, with kind faces around me, I cannot recall without a nervous feeling.

"I had left my friend's house one evening just before dusk, with the intention of skating a short distance up the noble Kennebec, which glided directly before the door. The night was beautifully clear. A peerless moon rode through an occasional fleecy cloud, and stars twinkled from the sky and from every frost-covered tree in millions. Your mind would wonder at the light that came glinting from ice, and snow-wreath, and incrusted branches, as the eye followed

for miles the broad gleam of the Kennebec, that like a jewelled zone swept between the mighty forests on its banks. And yet all was still. The cold seemed to have frozen tree, and air, and water, and every living thing that moved. Even the ringing of my skates echoed back from the Moccasin Hill with a startling clearness, and the crackle of the ice as I passed over it in my course seemed to follow the tide of the river with lightning speed.

"I had gone up the river nearly two miles, when coming to a little stream which empties into the larger, I turned into it to explore its course. Fir and hemlock of a century's growth met overhead, and formed an archway radiant with frostwork. All was dark within; but I was young and fearless, and as I peered into an unbroken forest that reared itself on the borders of the stream, I laughed with very joyousness; my wild hurrah rang through the silent woods, and I stood listening to the echo that reverberated again and again, until all was hushed. Suddenly a sound arose—it seemed to me to come from beneath the ice; it sounded low and tremulous at first, until it ended in one wild yell. I was appalled. Never before had such a noise met my ears. Presently I heard the twigs on shore crack as though from the tread of some animal—the blood rushed to my forehead—my energies returned, and I looked around me for some means of escape.

"The moon shone through the opening at the mouth

of the creek by which I had entered the forest, and considering this the best means of escape, I darted towards it like an arrow. It was hardly a hundred yards distant, and the swallow could scarcely excel my desperate flight; yet, as I turned my head to the shore, I could see two dark objects dashing through the underbrush at a pace nearly double in speed to my own. By this great speed, and the short yells which they occasionally gave, I knew at once that these were the much dreaded gray wolves.

"I had never met with these animals, but from the description given of them I had little pleasure in making their acquaintance. Their untameable fierceness, and the untiring strength which seems part of their nature, render them objects of dread to every benighted traveller.

"With their long gallop they pursue their prey, never straying from the track of their victim; and as the wearied hunter thinks that he has at last outstripped them, he finds that they but waited for the evening to seize their prey.

"The bushes that skirted the shore flew past with the velocity of lightning as I dashed on in my flight to pass the narrow opening. The outlet was nearly gained; one second more and I would be comparatively safe, when my pursuers appeared on the bank above me, which here rose to the height of ten feet. There was no time for thought, so I bent my head and dashed madly forward. The wolves sprang, but

miscalculating my speed, fell behind, while their intended prey glided out upon the river.

"Nature turned me towards home. The light flakes of snow spun from the iron of my skates, and I was some distance from my pursuers, when their fierce howl told me I was still their fugitive. I did not look back—I did not feel afraid, or sorry, or glad; one thought of home, of the bright faces awaiting my return, and of their tears if they never should see me, and then every energy of body and mind were exerted for escape. I was perfectly at home on the ice. Many were the days that I spent on my good skates, never thinking that they would thus prove my only means of safety. Every half minute an alternate yelp from my fierce attendants made me but too certain that they were in close pursuit. Nearer and nearer they came; I heard their feet pattering on the ice nearer still, until I could feel their breath and hear their snuffing scent. Every nerve and muscle in my frame was stretched to the utmost tension.

The trees along the shore seemed to dance in an uncertain light, and my brain turned with my own breathless speed, yet still they seemed to hiss forth their breath with a sound truly horrible, when an involuntary motion on my part turned me out of my course. The wolves, close behind, unable to stop, and as unable to turn on the smooth ice, slipped and fell, still going on far ahead; their tongues were lolling out, their white tusks glaring from their bloody

mouths, their dark shaggy breasts were fleeced with foam, and as they passed me their eyes glared, and they howled with fury. The thought flashed on my mind, that by this means I could avoid them, namely, by turning aside whenever they came too near; for they, by the formation of their feet, are unable to run on ice except in a straight line.

"I immediately acted upon this plan. The wolves having regained their feet, sprang directly towards me. The race was renewed for twenty yards up the stream; they were already close on my back, when I glided round and dashed directly past my pursuers. A fierce yell greeted my evolution, and the wolves, slipping upon their haunches, sailed onward, presenting a perfect picture of helplessness and baffled rage. Thus I gained nearly a hundred yards at each turning. This was repeated two or three times, every moment the animals getting more excited and baffled.

"At one time, by delaying my turning too long, my sanguinary antagonists came so near that they threw the white foam over my dress as they sprang to seize me, and their teeth clashed together like the spring of a fox-trap. Had my skates failed for one instant, had I tripped on a stick, or caught my foot in a fissure of the ice, the story I am now telling would never have been told.

"I thought all the chances over; I knew where they would first take hold of me if I fell; I thought how long it would be before I died, and then there

A SKATER CHASED BY WOLVES.

The thought flashed on my mind, that by this means I could avoid them, namely, by turning aside whenever they came too near; for they, by the formation of their feet, are unable to run on ice except in a straight line.—Page 406.

would be a search for the body that would already have its tomb; for oh! how fast man's mind traces out all the dread colours of death's picture, only those who have been near the grim original can tell.

"But I soon came opposite the house, and my hounds—I knew their deep voices—roused by the noise, bayed furiously from the kennels. I heard their chains rattle: how I wished they would break them! and then I should have protectors that would be peers to the fiercest denizens of the forest. The wolves taking the hint conveyed by the dogs, stopped in their mad career, and after a moment's consideration, turned and fled. I watched them until their forms disappeared over a neighbouring hill; then taking off my skates, wended my way to the house, with feelings which may be better imagined than described. But even yet I never see a broad sheet of ice in the moonshine, without thinking of that snuffing breath and those fearful things that followed me so closely down the frozen Kennebec."

Such is the strange American tale of escape from the winter wolves. In Poland and Russia they are no less dreaded; and the traveller, even when flying over the snow in his swift sledge, often finds the speed of his horses barely sufficient to rescue him from the hungry pack. On such occasions their merciless rapacity often proves his means of escape; for no sooner does he shoot down one of the foremost, than the whole pack crowd round it and tear it to

pieces. By such means time is gained, and the affrighted horses, fleeing at their utmost speed, at length dash with the sledge into the shelter of the long looked-for station.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### WILD LAKES OF THE ARIONDACK.

TURN we now to the northward, for our "Wild Scenes" have lingered long upon the green and waving plains that shimmer in the breezy sunshine of the south.

Trolling anywhere over good water has its merits, but this mode of fishing, when practised on Lake Pleasant and Round Lake, of a sultry, pulseless summer's day, after the season has gone by, has its romance; and it is concerning this striking feature thereof, that I propose now to write.

I was extremely ambitious of salmon-trout—or "lakers," as they call them; and must confess that my mind was so preoccupied by the glistening image of a twenty-pounder dancing at the end of my line, while preparing to come here, that it never once occurred to me to inquire whether I should be in season for them.

My friend, a placid son of the angle, but altogether unaccustomed to the wild life of a hunter, had new-

rigged his tackle with the painstaking skill of true science—while I, who pretend to no knowledge of the niceties of art, had left mine to the experience of George Holland, our chosen guide. I shall not, however, detain the reader with this gentle sport, but lure him on to the more exciting scenes into which my friend next followed me.

Although the most inveterate of veteran fly-fishers, Piscator had, even in our short survey of these wild sporting grounds, become thoroughly aroused to a sense of higher things than brook trout; and not in the least discouraged by a first failure, he now breathed quicker, with a yet more eager emulation for still nobler quarry! In short, as our guide, George, said—"He's down on the deer up Cungamunck!"

The reader is perhaps already familiar with the mode of hunting deer by torch-light, which has been so often described; but I have some doubts about his being so with that of hunting them by candle-light, which, I believe, is peculiar to the Lake country. This hunt must take place during the warm months, when flies are most abundant. Indeed, it is as much to escape from their persecutions as to browse upon certain varieties of water-plants, which then make their appearance along the edges of the marshes, streams, and lakes, that the deer come into the water to feed, and thus afford an opportunity for this evening sport.

The double-barreled gun of my companion, which had heretofore been guilty of nothing more serious than woodcock and ducks, had to be unscrewed, taken apart, and cleaned to the last degree of scrupulous nicety, in preparation for the more important work on hand. Then, with mathematical precision, it was duly charged, and with a flask in each pocket —for *two* kinds of ammunition are indispensable on such occasions!—he is ready.

Compared with that of my companion, who had amused me by the anxious preparations he made to protect himself with India-rubber overall, and other appliances against wet, my equipment was considerably simplified, though I must confess to an ever-present terror of the flies, which was quite an offset to Piscator's fears, and cost me quite as much preparation to guard against.

I knew that the oil of pennyroyal was a specific against their attacks; but aside from my aversion to the use of so disagreeable an article, I had forgotten it, so that the only resource left me had been to buy a green veil at Northfield, and cutting a hole in the centre large enough for the crown of my broad brimmed Leghorn to pass through, I had the ends taken up and a puckering string run around them, so that they could be drawn close about my neck—thus securely surrounding my face with a net which would defy even black gnats. Thus, with rifle (which is my favourite weapon) in hand, and my personal

*ammunition* in pocket, I, too, considered myself equipped for the night hunt.

Piscator was characteristically disregardful of "the flies," laughing quite as much at my precautions against them as I had done at his against getting wet, and calling our guide, he tramped away, followed by me, towards the boat at the outlet. There we found everything needful already in the boat. The additions to its ordinary equipment were very few and simple. A stout pine stick had been let into an auger-hole through a board which had been placed across the bow. This stood some four feet high; and upon the top of it was placed a triangular-shaped box, opened at the wide end, and which was intended to hold the lighted candles. Then there was a low seat designed for the marksman, who sat forward, just behind the staff and box-lantern; then we had a paddle, which was to be used when we reached the scene of operations, where the ordinary oars were to be laid aside.

Now we embarked, and set off down the narrow but deep outlet. It here takes the name of Sockendog River, and its course towards the south-east is through a wide valley, between two chains of hills.

It was a strange, lonely scene, and a dream-like hush was over it, so that we could hear our hearts beat above the soft lapsing of the oars. It seemed so wild, and was so still here, that no other sounds should intrude but the splash of the bull-frog, the

rustling of the wading deer among the flags, and the musically shrill warble of the black-winged scarlet tanager, from out the deep shadows of the forest of old pines. Now is the time when the deer begin to come down from the hills to feed upon the tender grasses and water-plants that grow in the bed and along the edges of the stream; and we may expect any moment, when we make the short turns, which, although the stream is deep, are often hardly long enough for the boat to lie in, or wide enough for the oars, to see a tawny head uplifted in the startle, and reaching out from the long grass over the channel to gaze at our coming with pricked ears.

We were soon at the wider meadows, which indicated our approach to the outlet of Elm Lake, and here was the ground where the night hunt was to commence. Darkness had not yet settled down, and until it came our lights would be of no avail; so the oars were unshipped, and the boat run through the mash to shore, and there we lay to until it became dark enough to light the candles!

We stood underneath the bordering pines, and as soon as we became stationary, the dusky air thickened with the black and venomous swarms of mosquitoes, flies and gnats, and the hungry diapason of their music was fairly roared into our ears! No herd of famished wolves was ever more desperately ravenous than this fierce multitude seemed to be; for as I was tolerably protected by my veil, I could afford to be

philosophical in my observations on the suffering of my two unfortunate companions.

George was very loquacious, and having provided himself with a thick bough, kept that in motion with his words; for he seemed to have a desperate sort of feeling that he must maintain our courage and his own by talking, or else we would be compelled to give in! He amused us in this trying interval with many stories of his bold adventuring through these northern snows in hunting the dangerous moose; while Piscator puffed his cigar, the fumes of which proved a much more effective protector against our merciless assailants than any of his previous attempts at open battle with his myriad foes.

The night settled rapidly, though it brought no alleviation of the plague of flies, which on warm evenings most abound for some hours after sunset. George now stepped cautiously to the stern of the boat, and taking the candles from the box, proceeded to light them and place them in the triangular box on the staff at the bow. Then with great care we noiselessly took our seats, and he paddled the boat with surprising stillness up the outlet. Mine was the foremost seat—as allotted—and though the light above shone powerfully upon the shrubs and grass in front of us on the side of the channel, yet not one ray of it fell upon me! So with a far-thrown light before us, we glided in darkness up the channel, seeing every blade of grass as we advanced, while we were our-

selves unseen! But the sky had now clouded, and the white mist began to curl up before us, and we only saw the rank grass and elder bushes in advance as it lifted at intervals.

We glided through the white-wreathed silence for a while, with the marsh plants and grass showing through the gloom on one side, and the tall shrubs on the other, when suddenly there is a splashing to our right—the boat stops—splash! splash! splash! off they go with a loud whistle as they plunge away—two deer are gone! They had been frightened by the incessant movement of our hands in striking off the clinging flies.

George gives muttered expression to his chagrin, and we move on into the lake without a word from us. Now we are gliding along its marshy shore, and the only sound we make is that caused by the low grating of the bottom of our boat against the heavy leaves of the water-lilies, which cover the whole surface as far as we can see; but that is not far. The heavy mist-wreaths still curl up around us, and, arching to our light, roll and spread their whitened volumes murkily. The slow boat ploughs through these fantastic shapes as if it laboured with their weight; but now and then an eddy of the mountain wind lifts them, whirling in broken masses, and reveals the dark shadows of the forest on the shore, with the shining flags that push up among the bordering lilies. The night is becoming chill, and we have crept into

every cove and winding strait among the inlets along the shore, and still the same slow-rising vapour twists and rolls in huge white phantoms, brushing past us. No deer yet, for they seem to have been all startled by our first misadventure; we should have seen a dozen eyes shine by our light before this. We are cold as cold can be, for much time has now passed, and chilled, too, by the disappointment. Now we shoot into a narrow cove between two islands. The long grass and shrubs on either side nearly meet above our heads; we must move with still greater caution, lest we brush them.

Now the narrow way widens again somewhat, and we go winding on, while our advance light dawns with a strange gleam beneath the curling vapour upon the dense wall of leafy stems on either side, and we seem urging up, among ghastly clouds, the glistening steep of night. It is a wild unearthly scene, and we shudder with chilly awe under the midnight fogs.

Suddenly a splashing plunge in the deep marsh to our right attracts my notice.

"Hist!" says George in a whisper, "rise up, rise softly, he stands there—over the bushes—see his eyes!"

"Steady, George." I rise as carefully as my stiffened limbs would permit; and now the mist-wreaths on an eddy of the night-wind rise with me. Slowly! slowly! See the antlered head above the cover, and the shining eyes. A shrill loud whistle—I fire as he

bounds—a heay plunge—a struggle in the tossing covert, and all is still.

"You've got him! you got him this time, sir!" shouted George; and the sound of his human voice broke the spell that was upon me, as of a heavy vision, and, with a long breath of suppressed excitement, I plunge after him to assist in dragging our prey to the boat. It was a fine buck, and I had shot him between the eyes. That was a moment of exultation, not altogether without some unworthy feeling of triumph, at the blank looks of Piscator, when, as he took his seat now in front, we discovered that the lights were nearly exhausted, and that there would be little chance for him to get a shot at all. The candles soon went out, and we got lost upon the lake, where our bewildered guide continued to row up and down until nearly daylight, through the pitchy darkness; at last he found a landing by accident, and, nearly frozen, we made our way to the house of a hunter, whose kind hospitality gave rest to our weary and chilled frames.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### TROUTING ON JESSUP'S RIVER.

We could not remain quiet long at a time, for my restless friend had not yet had a fair trial of the "flies" at trout. The sport which lasts longest, is the most abundant, the most admired, and most practised by the frequenters of the lake country, is that of taking the speckled or brook trout with the rod.

The larger lakes afford good trolling grounds, when resorted to in the right season; but the trolling season, which begins in March, is too early for the majority of anglers, who cannot leave their spring business for mere sport. But when summer comes, business is over; and then the rejoicing anglers, like children broke loose from school, scatter abroad over the mountainous places of the land, panting for fresh air.

To such it makes little difference, when they reach here, to find that the fishing-grounds for trout are not close at hand, but that they must go yet farther, from five to thirty miles, among the rough wild hills, to fresher streams, amidst valleys deeper than these. It seems strange, to be sure, and very provoking to them, if they go without a proper knowledge of the season, to find that these wide clear sheets, with all their inlets and outlets, are but so much dead water

to them, affording no sport, after May, worth notice. But they soon get over this, for the mountain breezes are very inspiriting; and they look towards the blue ridges with emulation, and brace themselves up to meet the rude exigencies of a "shanteeing out," for a few days, amidst storm or sunshine, as the evening heavens may send.

"The Bridge" at Jessup's River is well known to sportsmen; and to this point we made our first fly-fishing expedition. The eyes of Piscator glistened at the thought, and early was he busied with hasty fingers through an hour of ardent preparation amongst his varied and complicated tackle. Now was his time for triumph. In all the ruder sports in which we had heretofore been engaged, I, assisted by mere chance, had been most successful; but now the infallible certainty of skill and science were to be demonstrated in himself, and the orthodoxy of flies vindicated to my unsophisticated sense.

The simple preparations were early completed; the cooking apparatus, which was primitive enough to suit the taste of an ascetic, consisted in a single frying-pan. The blankets, with the guns, ammunition, rods, &c., were all disposed in the waggon of our host, which stood ready at the door. It was a rough affair, with stiff wooden springs, like all those of the country, and suited to the mountainous roads they are intended to traverse, rather than for civilized ideas of comfort. We, however, bounded into the low-backed

seat; and if it had been cushioned to suit royalty, we could not have been more secure than we were of such comfort as a backwood sportsman looks for. We soon found ourselves rumbling, pitching, and jolting, over a road even worse than that which brought us first to the lake. It seemed to me that nothing but the surprising docility of the ponies which drew us, could have saved us, strong waggon and all, from being jolted to atoms. I soon got tired of this, and sprang out with my gun, determined to foot it ahead, in the hope of seeing a partridge or red squirrel.

We arrived at the "bridge" about the middle of the afternoon. There we found an old field called Wilcox's clearing, and, like all places I had seen in this fine grazing region, it was still well sodded down in blue grass and clover. Our luggage having been deposited in the shantee, consisting almost entirely of boards torn from the old house, which were leaned against the sides of two forks placed a few feet apart, we set off at once for the falls, a short distance above This was merely an initial trial, to obtain enough for dinner, and find the prognostics of the next day's sport in feeling the manner of the fish.

At the falls the river is only about fifteen feet wide, though its average width is from twenty-five to thirty. The water tumbles over a ledge of about ten feet, at the bottom of which is a fine hole, while on the surface sheets of foam are whirled round and round upon

the tormented eddies, for the stream has considerable volume and power.

We stepped cautiously along the ledge, Piscator ahead, and holding his flies ready for a cast, which was most artistically made, not without a glance of triumph at me, then preparing to do the same with the humble angle-worm. The "flies" fall—I see the glance of half a dozen golden sides darting at them; but by this time my own cast is made, and I am fully occupied with the struggles of a fine trout.

My companion's success was again far short of mine, and seeing him looking at my trout lying beside me, I said: "Try the worms, good Piscator—here they are. This is not the right time of day for them to take the flies in this river, I judge."

Improving the door of escape thus opened to him, he took off the flies and used worms with immediate and brilliant success, which brought back the smile to his face; and he would now and then as calmly brush away the distracting swarm of flies from his face, as if they had been mere innocent motes. But later that evening came a temporary triumph for Piscator. The hole at the falls was soon exhausted, and we moved down to glean the ripples. It was nearly sunset, and here the pertinacious Piscator determined to try the flies again. He cast with three, and instantly struck two half-pound trout, which, after a spirited play, he safely landed. Rarely have I seen a prouder look of triumph than that which glowed

on his face as he bade me "look there!" when he landed them.

"Very fine, Piscator—a capital feat! but I fear it was an accident. You will not get any more that way."

"We shall see, sir," said he, and commenced whipping the water again, but to no avail, while I continued throwing them out with great rapidity.

I abstained from watching him, for I had no desire to spoil his evening sport by taunting him to continue his experiment. I soon observed him throwing out the fish with great spirit again. I merely shouted to him across the stream—"the angle-worm once more, Piscator?"

"Yes!" with a laugh.

As the sun went down the black gnats began to make themselves felt in their smarting myriads, and we forthwith beat a hasty retreat to the shantee.

We had taken about ten pounds of trout; and the first procedure, after reaching the camp, was to build a "smudge," or smoke-fire, to drive away these abominable gnats, which fortunately take flight with the first whiff of smoke, and the next was to prepare the fish for dinner, though not till all had been carefully dressed by the guide, and placed in the cold current of the little spring stream near, that they might keep sound.

Now came the rousing fire, and soon some splendid trout were piled upon dishes of fresh pealed elm bark before us. They were very skilfully cooked, and no

epicure ever enjoyed a feast more thoroughly than we did our well-flavoured and delicious trout, in that rude shantee.

The feast being over, then to recline back upon the fresh couch of soft spruce boughs, and, with a cigar in mouth, watch the gathering night-shades brooding lower and more low upon the thick wild forest in front, far into the depths of which the leaping flames of our crackling fire go, darting now and then with a revealing tongue of quick light, and listening to the owl make hoarse answer to the wolf afar off—to think of wild passages in a life of adventure years ago amidst surroundings such as this; with the additional spice of peril from savage and treacherous foes, and then, as the hushed life subsides into a stiller mood, see the faces of loved ones come to you through the darkness, with a smile from out your distant home, and while it sinks sweetly on your heart, subside into happy and dream-peopled slumber! "This is bliss!" the bliss of the shantee to the wearied sportsman! a bliss unattainable by the toiler, and still more by the lounger of the city.

We were on foot with the sun next morning, and after another feast, which we appreciated with unpalled appetites, we set off for some deep spring holes nearly a mile above the falls. The morning set cloudy, and rain fell piteously for several hours. But if this change detracted from our sport, it at least served to give zest to the evening's shelter and repose.

I never felt more delightfully than I did when I sat down to a fine dinner that evening in the old tavern, and very much of this pleasurable feeling of entire comfort I attributed to the prompt use of the cold bath, on reaching our temporary home, wet, weary, and shivering with cold. This, with a change of clothes, restored me to a healthy glow of warmth, ready to enjoy whatever our host might provide.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### MOOSE AND DEER-HUNTING AMONG THE NORTHERN LAKES.

I HAVE already furnished a description of two modes of hunting deer practised in the lake country; one by driving them into the lake, the other by candle-light on the marsh. These are methods almost peculiar to this Ariondack region, while there are several more which they practise there, in common with many other parts, such as driving on the "run-ways"—still-hunting, and hunting on the "crust" with snow-shoes.

Deer are so surprisingly abundant, that it is worth while to know something of the how, the wherefore, and the when of all these methods; for nothing is more certain than that you can get this game, and an abundance of it, if you only go at the right time, and seek it in the right way.

The two favourite methods of taking deer are running them into the lake, and hunting them on the crust; the first for summer and autumn, the other, of course, for winter.

The proper time for the first method is about the beginning of September, when the down is off their horns, and they are getting into the "blue coat." That is, the season may be said to be then commenced, for the deer are then improving every day. In three weeks more they will be "seal-fat," and will take to the water almost as soon as you start them. This sport continues until the lakes freeze over, when hunting on the crust takes its place.

But as I could at any time start a deer within half a mile of where I then quartered, at a rude farm-house near a small lake, and that within the hour, too, by the help of the old hound Ring, it is not to be wondered at that I have several times succeeded, with all the uncertainty, in getting a deer on the run-way.

Whittaker Lake is now more resorted to, and that too with more success, than any other nearer than Louis Lake. It always has been, and must continue, so long as there are any deer in the country, to be the favourite place of refuge for them, on account of its peculiar conformation. Its two islands, and the narrow coves for which it is peculiar, offer many facilities for ready escape, by losing the dogs. In this hunt there should generally be at least two boats on the lake. To give some idea of the method of con-

ducting this hunt practised by the natives here, each of whom is a good oarsman of course, I will give an outline of what three men accomplished in a single day's hunt.

Three is the proper number to act without mutual embarrassment, two to man the boats, and one to "put out" the dogs. This party had two dogs, one of which was remarkably sagacious and well-trained. They shanteed on the shore the previous night, and the dogs were put out by sunrise in the morning.

The two boatmen, or rather, one in a boat and the other in a small canoe, took position; the boat hid in the grass of the marsh at one end, and the canoe under the alders at the point of one of the islands. In a very short time a large buck came splashing through the marsh in a terrible panic, and nearly ran over the man in the boat, who shot him before he reached the deep water. The dogs were then put out again, and before ten o'clock they brought another deer down to the water; but this fellow skulked, swam across a narrow cove, and made off again. He did not return to this lake, which is very unusual, but made off to another, Elm Lake, three miles distant. The dogs were not reclaimed until noon. After feeding and a short rest they were out for a third race, and in a little while drove in a third deer, which struck out for the widest part of the lake.

Both hunters started in pursuit; the oarsman cut it off from land, and the boatsman, who was furnished

with a long forked stick, across the prongs of which a slip-noose of rope was tied, now came up by the side of the swimming deer, and threw the rope over its head. It plunged very violently, but in spite of its struggles he pushed its head under water with the assistance of the fork, and soon drowned it. This was a fine doe.

The dogs were again put out, and after a long race brought in a yearling spike buck. It came to the water twice, but as it had the wind of the two hunters both times, it turned and went out. It came at last on the opposite side, and struck right out for the open water. The canoe man did not succeed in cutting it off this time, and it reached one of the islands. The boatman shot at it as it was going out, and missed.

They then took a position on each side to prevent its escape, while "Old Sound," who had reached the shore, and comprehended in a moment how matters were, swam to the island, and soon routed the little buck, which now attempted to reach the second island. The man in the canoe cut it off this time, and darting up alongside of it as it swam, seized it by its short horns, and drawing its head back, gave it the finishing stroke with his hunting-knife.

But the boatman in the meantime had his hands full. He had not time to load his gun, or see what became of the young buck; for the other dog had brought down an enormous old buck, which took the

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Then with stiffened bristles, and a hoarse low of wrath, it raised itself in the water and planted its forefeet on the side of the boat.—Page 427.

water at the same time near him. He lay still and let it swim out some distance, and then gave chase. He was soon up with it in wide water, and attempted to throw the noose over its horns. The buck showed fight, and striking up suddenly knocked the stick from his grasp. Then with stiffened bristles and a hoarse low of wrath it raised itself in the water, and planted its fore-feet on the side of the boat.

The man was too old a hunter to be much alarmed, though the deer seemed determined to turn the boat over or get in. The gun was empty, as we have said, but these men always throw a stout club of heavy green wood into the bottom of the boat to provide against contingencies such as these; indeed they frequently take nothing else with them, as this is usually sufficient to kill any deer. A blow across the head with this club caused the buck to drop back into the water, with its courage considerably cooled.

However, it soon renewed the fight, and as it caught most of the blows aimed at its head upon its immense horns, the man found he had both a tough and a dangerous job before him. The deer, in the meantime, was making gradually for the shore, and the hunter saw that it would effect its escape at last if he continued to fight; so he directed all his efforts to turning it off from shore, shouting at the same time to his comrade for help. He was nearly worn out with fatigue, and had received severe blows from the horns

of the deer, when his friend came to his assistance and shot it through the head.

It was now nearly dark, and with four deer as the result of one day's sport, they returned perfectly satisfied, as well as worn out, to their shantee for the night. This day's work, though an unusually successful one, will stand in its modes and incidents for a pretty fair epitome of the sport of "driving deer into the lake."

The boatman sometimes takes the deer by the tail and makes it draw the boat; and I know of instances where the perilous feat of seizing a buck by the horns, and holding its head under water until drowned, has been performed. But such feats as this last are as rare as they are unwise. The most amusing instance I have heard of these attempts to capture a grown animal is furnished in that which was made by a party of sagacious hunters in this neighbourhood a winter ago, to take an old bull moose alive with ropes.

Some lucky hunter had recently succeeded in capturing a couple of moose alive, and had sold them to a menagerie company for a round sum. This set all the hunters in a furor to capture live moose. The resort of a famous large bull having been discovered by a half-bred Indian hunter, he was accompanied by several of the hunters about Lake Pleasant, on a grand turn-out to make the attempt upon this fellow. The snow was very deep, and the moose was soon brought

to a stand by the men on their snow-shoes. When they came up, they found he had backed himself into a strong position, with the roots of a torn-up tree in his rear on one side, and a great shelving rock on the other. He was an enormous fellow, and they proceeded to make their demonstrations with most respectful caution.

One of the party ascended the trunk of the inclining tree from his rear, and climbing thence on to the shelving rock above, from, as he supposed, a very safe elevation, succeeded in throwing a rope-noose over one of its spreading antlers. Another adventurer, more daring than the first, took up a position on the trunk of a fallen tree, almost touching the flanks of the animal with his feet, and reaching over dropped a second rope upon its horns, and was proceeding triumphantly to give it a turn around the trunk, thinking they had it all safe now. The creature shook its head, and making a sudden plunge forward, jerked the men headforemost from both rocky shelf and log, snapping their nooses. They fell against the hinder parts of the moose; but as those in front, seeing their danger, made a great clamour at the moment, the animal did not notice them, though, as it retreated back to its strong position, it trampled upon their prostrate forms with its hind feet. The fellows yelled to them to shoot, but as they had irritated the moose in front, it made a dash at them again, and they crawled out considerably bruised. Not discouraged by any means as

yet, another of the party succeeded in getting hold of the end of the broken rope, and this was immediately secured to a limb of the fallen tree once more.

They now thought they were certain to triumph, as they roped its horns more securely than before, and proceeded to throw slip-nooses among its feet, in the hope that it might step into them, and that they would then be able to throw it. It was very wary of the ropes. They thus caught one foot only, after worrying the whole day with the creature, and getting several of the party even more severely hurt. But when the hunter who had this rope, and who was standing directly in front of the infuriated animal, attempted to jerk the foot from under it, it made one tremendous surge at him, snapped the rope about its horns, and tossed him into the air some ten feet on its broad, snow-shovelling antlers—while the second hero of the ropes on the log had his legs jerked from under him, and fell as the first had fallen. There was a frightened scattering of the whole party this time in earnest, while the moose, with bristling sulkiness, retreated again to its old position. The bruised and crippled hunter who had been thus summarily tossed, seized his gun, limped up close to the moose and shot it dead in his rage, just as if he had any right to have expected other treatment for his folly.

This party was thoroughly satisfied with their single experiment, and have vowed never to make another such attempt.

But crust hunting is by far the most destructive method of pursuing the deer known in this region. The deer form "yards" on the bleak northern sides of the mountains, and these are sometimes five or six miles in extent, and containing a great number of deer. They have deep roads or paths leading in every direction, through the snow, and will never leave these unless forced by the dog to do so. The deer seldom runs far, but stops to fight until the hunter comes up and kills it with his rifle, and sometimes with a club or axe.

There is a well authenticated instance in illustration, that I will relate. My guide had been a famous hunter in his day. When he was about sixteen his father lived upon a high hill, in sight of my shantee. In a valley half-a-mile from the hut, he had a small sugar camp. One bright morning, early in March, when a slight snow had fallen over-night upon the old crust, which was thin and melted through in places, Clark, who was a stout youth, started to the sugar camp to clean and set the troughs, as it promised to be a fine day for the sap of the maple tree to run. He said he would be back in time for breakfast, and followed by a noble hound, he was soon out of sight.

The family waited and waited in vain for his return, until noon, when his father, overcome by uneasiness, started in pursuit of the boy; for knowing that he had no kind of weapon, not even a pocket-knife, with him, he could not but fear that some accident had

happened. He met him returning, panting up the hill.

"Why, Clark, what in the name of wonder has been keeping you all the morning?"

"I got myself into business, and had it to attend to; I've been killing deer."

"Killing deer? What, did you gouge their eyes out? You have got nothing about you to kill deer with."

"But I found a spruce knot that answered."

The boy then went on to relate how he had found the tracks of four deer that had come into the sugar camp. The dog pursued them. It should be explained that the spring thaw had commenced, and the snow was nearly melted, except under the shade of the deep woods, where it was as deep as ever, and the crust so thin that the deer went through easily. So soon as they came to the deep snow, the dog stopped one. The boy followed, and where the snow had thawed he found an old spruce log of great size, which had fallen into decay, and left the knots of the limbs, which run back clear into the heart, round and heavy almost as iron. Clark snatched up one of these, and when he came in sight the dog immediately seized the deer and dragged it down on the snow. Clark came up with his knot-club and knocked it on the head. They then followed on again, and in a short time came up with another, which was served in the same way, and a third also.

The fourth got to the Cungamunck River, and plunged into a small hole through the ice. The dog would follow on the ice as it swam round and round, and watching an opportunity, seize the deer by the nose, and pulling back with all his might, endeavour to drag it out. The deer would place its fore-feet against the ice and resist this proceeding, until Clark came up at last, and for fear his dog might be dragged in and get under the ice, he ended the pulling match by knocking the deer on the head.

This was a pretty fair morning's work for a youth without arms of any kind, but those nature had given him. This same dog, "Old Sound," met with a great many adventures in his day. One of these is worth relating. His master, with two other men, were out deer-hunting in snow shoes, and on the side of Dug Mountain the dog started three deer. They followed on and soon killed two of them; the other, a fine young three-year-old buck, showed himself to be, as the old man said, "the cunningest deer I ever see'd." There is a tremendous ledge on the side of this mountain, which gives it its name, for it is bare of earth and almost perpendicular, and looks as if it had been "dug" down the face.

The deer was in full view, and commenced climbing up along the edge of this ledge to escape from the dog, who, when he came up, in vain essayed the same feat. After falling back several times in the effort to follow the deer, the sagacious creature gave it up, and

followed along the foot of the ledge to the other side. The deer looked as if it must fall from its airy perch every instant, and they expected to see it dashed to pieces; but it descended in safety, to be met by the dog on the other side. There the chase was renewed, until the old man knew, by the manner of his bark, that the dog had brought it to bay. The three hunters now endeavoured to outstrip each other in getting to the deer, but the others not being accustomed to snow shoes, got theirs entangled in their hurry, and fell. The old man came up in sight of the deer alone.

He had followed the tracks in the snow, and to his great surprise had not heard the dog bark for some time. There stood the deer in the snow, bolt upright, with its feet gathered up under it, and with bristles raised as if for a spring; but it remained perfectly still, eyeing the approaching hunter.

"There's the deer," he said to himself, "but where's my dog? I can't see him anywhere!" But the first thing to be done was to shoot the deer—which he did. The animal fell over in the snow, and to his great astonishment, the dog bounded up from beneath its feet, shaking the snow from its hair.

Old Sound looked rather humiliated, and seating himself a little distance off, gazed upon his dying conqueror in demure silence. The deer having been baffled in an extraordinary effort to get rid of its noisy foe, had adopted the curious expedient of first beating him down in the snow with its fore-paws, and then

deliberately standing on his prostrate body. Deer do some ugly things of this kind occasionally.

One of the neighbouring hunters who was passing through the woods on the crust, without any weapon but his pocket-knife, came upon three deer, one of which was an immense buck. The buck eyed the man as he came up, until he was within a few yards of him, and then made right at him, with his hair turned the wrong way. He knocked the man down in the snow, and commenced very deliberately stamping him to death. He kept it up until the man lay still, and then he would step off a little distance and turn to look at his victim. If the man moved, he would plunge upon him again and give him another pounding, until he was content to lie still. This game had been repeated several times; and the man, whose strength was fast going, felt that he would soon be killed if he could not get out of this scrape in some way; for even if he lay still, the deer showed no disposition to leave him, and he must freeze to death soon in his cold bed. He now for the first time bethought him of his knife, and at the expense of another pounding, got his hand into the pocket.

The deer stood off a little distance watching him, but when he had secured the knife, and managed to work it open with one hand, he made a movement by kicking up the snow with his feet. The buck was on him in an instant, as usual, and the man, urged now to despair, rose upon his elbow, and making three or four savage

cuts upwards with his knife, succeeded in reaching the vitals of the buck, who staggered off a few paces and fell dead upon the snow. The man got home with great difficulty, and was laid up for some time after with his hurts. This was a lesson he never forgot, and he always took a gun with him afterwards when he went into the woods on a crust.

Piscator and I having determined on a trip to the famous Whittaker Lake, we set off on a fine morning before sunrise, and on foot, accompanied by two guides and as many dogs, well trained to this lake hunting. The morning proved to be especially warm, and one of the guides characterized it, as we passed up the southern side of a long hill, as "a yaller day." The little oxen performed miracles in dragging the sled with our boat on it through the inconceivably rugged and tangled woods, to the lake. The two guides went ahead to open the way. We arrived at the margin between twelve and one. When I reached the gap of the forest, which gave us an outlook over the lake—for I was some little distance ahead—imagine my astonishment at seeing four or five deer leisurely feeding on the edge of the water, on the opposite shore. My first hasty impulse was to fire my rifle at them, they seemed so close; but then I remembered, and was at the same time reminded by the guide who followed, that the lake was nearly half a mile wide. The deer had not observed or heard us, since we had approached as quietly as possible.

I stood and watched for sometime the graceful and unconscious creatures leisurely cropping the lily leaves and buds that lay upon the surface of the calm lake. What a shame it seemed that we had thus come to disturb and rouse, with a bloody reveille, this happy quiet! They seemed, in their hill-girt home, to be utterly ignorant of man, and the old buck tossed his antlered head, as proudly as if he were sole monarch of these wilds. They were in view, feeding and sporting along the edge of the water for a full half hour.

It would have been a lesson for those doctors of the Stoic school, of whom my friend Piscator is an emulous disciple, to have witnessed the eager longing which irradiated his face while he gazed upon this tranquil scene. His double-barrel quivered in his grasp with the excitement, and his round red lips looked watery. With such a sight before us, you may rest assured there was no time lost in despatching our dinner, preparatory for work. The boat was now quickly launched, but the moment it touched the water, loud and unearthly cries, deafening and sonorous, rose from every part of the lake. I looked around in astonishment, and the eyes of Piscator sought mine with something of a wild glance in them; but the guides smiled.

"Them's the loons!" said George.

Two or three of them now swan out from the point of the nearest island, and curiously approached us. I

saw at once that it was the loon, or northern diver; one of the most beautifully marked of all the water-fowl. They properly resented our intrusion upon their lovely and secluded breeding-places, of which they evidently had not been conscious until the splash of launching our boat upon their favourite element conveyed to them, through some mysterious medium of sympathy, the warning of our dangerous approaches. Their cry is strangely human, and yet inhuman too; and there is a wild and mournful quaver in it, such as I have frequently observed to be peculiar to birds which frequent desolate and solitary places. There is a strange and harmonious fitness in this which never struck me so forcibly as during our stay at this lonely place.

Louden, the man who was to put out the dogs to drive the deer, was first taken across the lake with his two dogs, and landed. George then brought back the boat for us. Piscator was to take his seat first in the boat. I accordingly now left them, and took my stand on the other end of the island. Soon all was perfect silence again, broken only at intervals by the clarion-like whoop of the troubled loons. I watched two of them, which, as I lay upon the moss, could see me only indistinctly, and urged by their strong curiosity, swam back and forward, each time coming slowly nearer me, until they were so close that I could see the shine of their dark eyes, and the white rings about their necks.

Soon the dogs opened musically, far up on the deep-

wooded side of Dug Mountain. It was a short and spirited race, and while I lay abstractedly tracing the reverberations of their voices among the mountains—a splash! My heart leaps. There! The deer has taken water at the southern end of the lake. See, he swims already, a noble fellow! But, alas, he is not coming for the open water! We shan't get him! He swims across that narrow cove—now he's out! See him shake the drops from his tawny hair, as he walks deliberately into the woods again!

There come the dogs! Old Turk, with his face half white and black, stands upon the shore an instant, snuffing over the water. In he plunges! and swims out into the lake towards us. The trick has told—he has lost the deer. George puts out in the boat to meet him. He takes him in and rows towards where the buck went out. He has nearly reached the shore—the dog stands with his fore-paws on the edge of the boat, snuffing the air. There! he plunges—he has caught the scent again, and away he goes, with eager yells, on the track.

In half an hour the deer is back, takes the water on the other side of the lake, and makes for the second island. Master George is off, and pulling with his best might and skill to cut the deer off from the shore. He has started too soon; the deer has seen him, and turns. They both disappear behind the point of the island.

The deer will be lost, for the gun he has is worth-

less. In a moment we hear the gun, and then all is silent for nearly half an hour. He has probably shot the deer. A pretty business this! We paying this impudent fellow to take the deer from under our very noses. I was greatly enraged, and it was well he did not make his appearance soon. But the other dog has started now. A noisy and exciting chase to and fro along the shore woods. After a while, who should make his appearance but Master George again, shouting at the top of his voice, as he turned a point of the island, with some small object swimming in the water before him—

"Here's your deer! Here's your deer!"

"It is, is it!" I exclaimed scornfully, for I had now rejoined Piscator. "That's no deer. It looks more like a rabbit or musk-rat."

"Come along down shore and shoot it; its a fawn," shouted our redoubtable boatman.

"Why, you rascal, I don't want to hurt that little creature! Take it alive!" I shouted.

The fellow felt he had his peace to make, and accordingly did his best to take the fawn alive. In his efforts to accomplish this, a most ludicrous and amusing scene occurred. The dog Turk, who had lost the trail of his deer at the water, then joined in the chase after the fawn, and now came swimming boldly out after it. George had seized the active little creature by the hind feet, and was endeavouring to drag it into the boat. He had nearly succeeded,

when Turk leaped half way out of the water and upon the back of the bleating fawn. George must release his hold to fight off the dog, and now the struggle commenced. The fierce and headstrong Turk, as in duty bound, is determined to kill the game, and George that he shall not. While these two are struggling, the poor little fawn would make some headway, then George would be compelled to take up his oars. The boat would shoot alongside again, and he would seize it by the ears or tail to have the same scene over again, for Turk was on hand to drag it back into the water, when he had lifted it partly out. George became furious at last, and his half-frantic, half-despairing screams of—"You Turk! Get away, Turk! Begone Turk!" mingled with the bleating of the fawn and the angry barking of the dog, and the splash and sputtering of the watery strife, produced a combination of sounds and scene so irresistibly comic, that I sank to the ground with peal upon peal of unrestrainable and almost hysterical laughter; for I enjoyed so immensely the absurd predicament of George, that I had no time to think of that of the poor little fawn which he at last shot, when about to escape. It turned out that the fellow had missed the deer after all, and let it escape. I now peremptorily put a stop to his going alone, and as Piscator had lost his chance, went into the boat myself.

It was late, but the dogs made another start, and

after a short race, a fine young buck entered the water, and instead of swimming, attempted, as the others had, to skulk along the shore. We knew he was lying down, for we should have seen his whole body, had he been standing up in the shallow marsh. We watched in silence to see what the next manœuvre would be when the dog came up, when suddenly a gun exploded from the woods on shore, the deer rose, and with a long bound made for the shore. It was out of our rifle range, but I could not resist the inclination, and sent a ball after him as he went into the bush. It was the presuming guide who put out the dogs. He did not see us as we lay concealed in the grass, and had fired at the deer. The dogs came up, we put them on the track, and they went off splendidly.

It was not more than a minute, and we all three stood in open view upon a log, upon which we had run the boat, when the deer came in again at precisely the same place. We stood still as if suddenly congealed—I with my rod half-driven home; it came cautiously into the water at first, but did not seem to have noticed us, as is always the case if you are perfectly motionless. At last it struck across the lake; we waited until it was too far from shore to turn back.—"Now!" I sprang into the boat, which George pushed off at the same moment, and we darted through the water. We soon closed upon the deer, which struck out violently as we approached, and it

saw that capture was sure; but the dogs were already swimming out to us. We must make quick work of it.

"Shoot!" cried George.

I fired at it, accordingly, and as it was going down, George seized it by its hind legs, and drew it into the boat. The weather now becoming unfavourable for the continuation of our sport, we concluded to break up our shantee the next day, and dismissing our guide, we pushed on some six miles further, through the mountains to the north, for Louis Lake, where we purposed spending a week in hunting and fishing at the shantee of "Old Sturge," his two boys, who were fifteen and sixteen years old, officiating as our guides.

This is the most picturesque and loveliest of all the lakes; and here we had abundant sport. The boys were extraordinary specimens of natural-born hunters, and proved to be admirable guides. These youths had been in the habit of walking since their early childhood the most incredible distances, in the wild mountains, and entirely alone. They were equally at home everywhere, as much so as the wild deer they hunted.

Old Sturge himself would be a credit to any country. He will walk forty miles a day with as little trouble as a dandy would feel promenading in Regent Street, or from the Astor to the Broadway Hotel. He goes in and out to his favourite lake, somewhat as if it

were only across the way. He is a helter-skelter, harum-scarum, good-natured, headlong fellow, who is for ever blundering into the most ludicrous scrapes with wild animals, and yet has manhood enough to come out right usually.

He always has a number of traps set near the lake. He was coming in one morning with one or two old hunters, and passing by a trap on the way, found a large bear caught by the hind-leg. Without waiting to shoot the creature, or indeed thinking at all of it, he rushed upon it with his knife to cut its throat. Bruin of course met him with the hug fraternal, and then commenced between them a desperate struggle. His comrades were too much paralyzed to come to his help, and before he succeeded in despatching the bear with his knife, his clothing had all been stripped off, and himself badly torn and bruised.

Nobody on the face of the earth but Old Sturge would ever have dreamed of doing such a stupidly reckless thing; but this is only one out of many such madcap capers. However, he is pioneering a settlement at Louis Lake most effectively, by taking there a large family of children—most of them boys, and as hardy as young partridges. He intends to keep a corner of the shantee for sportsmen who prefer Louis Lake, and the tough, wiry old fellow will hold himself in readiness to carry them astride his shoulders —if they desire it—thirty miles further into the wilderness.

There is an amusing story told of Old Sturge's first interview with a moose, which is worth giving before we dismiss him. It was soon after he came to the country from "down east," and when he was somewhat green upon the subject of wild animals in general.

Some one had shown him how to set his traps at Louis Lake, and one morning when he went to visit them, rifle in hand, he saw a huge black beast lying in the place of one of his traps. He said he thought it was Old Harry himself, with a bundle of pitchforks, and iron-wooden shovels on his head—but though mortally frightened, and very much disposed to run back home, he concluded finally, that to save his manhood he must take a shot at it anyhow. It had not seen him, and he was quite close, so he blazed away. Whether he shut his eyes or not, he does not know, but the creature paid no attention to him, and did not even turn its head.

Finding himself alive after this desperate venture, he took courage, hid behind a tree, and loaded again. He fired again, with the same result. He began now to think that it surely bore a charmed life, and said that when he looked along the barrel at it, it grew as large as a meeting-house, and that when in spite of his fear he aimed right at the middle of this great pile, the ball would go clear through, and it would close up again. He says he got madder and madder, and worse and worse scared every time he shot, until

he supposed he had been at it an hour or two, when, as his last load was fired, the great black beast got up and gave one tremendous bound. He heard his steel trap fall clashing back against the stones, and it was gone.

After he had sufficiently recovered from his trepidation, he went up to the trap, and found there, between its saw-like teeth, the veritable "split hoof," for which the old gentleman he took it for is so famous! He swears to this day that there was a strong smell of sulphur in the woods, which remained for weeks afterwards.

He came into the settlement in a great fright with the hoof, but the old hunters looked wise and solemn, shaking their heads. Sturge, poor fellow, could get no consolation out of them. When winter came, he went with a party to hunt moose, and when in the yard, they came upon a huge bull moose, Sturge was for making home as fast as his snow shoes would let him, yelling—"That's him! there he is again!" but the hunters stopped him with roars of laughter, and let him shoot at the bull until he brought it down, when he satisfied himself that it had not the "forked tail," and therefore was not the genuine Old Harry! But this was when Sturge was young and inexperienced, and his mistake after all was no more remarkable than many others that have been made at the susceptible age. He has killed many moose since, but always has to fire a great many shots at

them—for he says that somehow, since that time, they "*will* look so big he can't see his sights!"

Such are some of the scenes of romance and wild adventure, which are to be met with in the uncleared forests, and on the wide prairies of the American continent, where nature still reigns undisturbed, save by such bold intruders as those whose feats of daring and hardihood have supplied the materials of the preceding pages.

THE END.

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